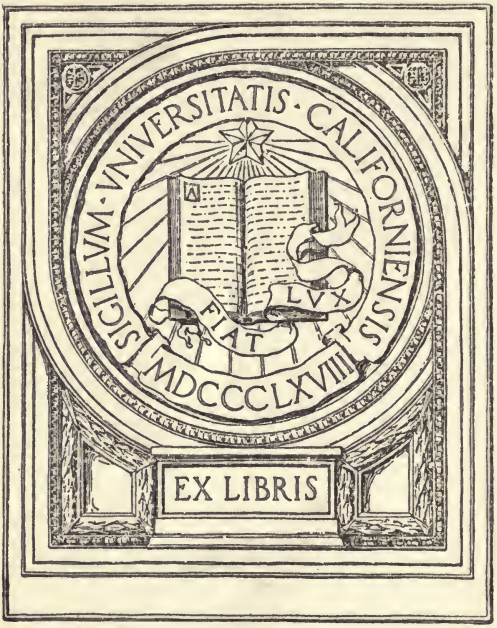
Mary In California

Constance Johnson



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TORONTO

(From painting by Mead Schaeffer)

MARY AND TRIX IN MUIR WOODS

MARY IN CALIFORNIA

BY

CONSTANCE JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF "MARY IN NEW MEXICO," ETC.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1922

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To
MARY ABIGAIL,

THE MAINSTAY OF THE FAMILY,
WHOSE FRIENDLY CRITICISM, AND
NUMEROUS ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN
THE INSPIRATION OF THIS BOOK

INTRODUCTION

To try to tell all the wonderful things of California in one small book is impossible. There is only space for a hop, skip, and jump sort of visit. The author hopes that she will make other young people wish to follow Mary to the Golden State and learn for themselves its many attractions, even if they cannot have quite all the adventures that came to this American family Robinson. But the welcome of the Californians will be there in good measure.

The author wishes to thank all the good friends who helped to make this book possible, and especially those at Mills College.

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MARY IN CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER I

A HOLDUP—WE MEET EL LOBO AGAIN

WE were awakened by being thrown violently from one side of the berth to the other, and by the sound of the grinding of the brakes against the wheels and the abrupt stopping of the train. In an instant the night's quiet was broken by eager and alarmed questions from the rest of the suddenly aroused sleepers as to what had happened. Bells were rung for the porter from many quarters. But before he had time to appear, the Doctor peered between the curtains, flash light in hand, and asked if Trix and I were all right.

Trix, our seven-year-old, who slept with me, had only half awakened, as she was thrown against me rather than the side of the car. I saw that the Doctor had drawn on his trousers and coat.

"I think something must have happened," he said. "If you are not hurt I will go forward. Dave and Mary are putting on some clothes, and it would be well for you to do so too."

The bells were still ringing in the car, and we could see in the dim light disheveled heads and half

clad legs and arms protruding from berths as the male passengers prepared to investigate. At that moment the porter came along. He was greeted with questions:

"What has happened?"

"Has there been an accident?"

"Now don't you folks be skeert. Just stay in the car along with me," was the reply. Which would have been reassuring if the man's voice had not been shaking with fear and his eyes fairly popping out of his head.

"No, I ain't seen the conductor, but I know it's all right."

"No, I cyan't go out to see. It's mah duty to stick to mah car. What would dey say to me if I left mah car in the middle of the night, boss?"

There was considerable grumbling, but many of the passengers quieted down, though still talking together in low tones. Two or three imperfectly dressed men issued from behind the curtained berths and stood rather foolishly in the aisle. The porter started to go to the back of the car. At that moment three distinct shots were heard coming from somewhere toward the front of the train. Instantly an uproar broke out in the car, and amid the confusion the porter permanently disappeared.

At the same moment Mary and Dave, the rest of our family, appeared, dressed and full of excitement.

"Mother, what has happened; where is Dad; where are we?"

Where were we indeed? The only thing I knew

for certain was that we were on the train running west from Santa Fé, and that our husband and father, who was expected to lecture at Mills College in a week, had left us in the night, clad in shoes and trousers superimposed on pajamas, heading toward some unknown adventure in the dark. We were a peaceful New England doctor's family. I felt as confused as a Fifth Reader would feel if Nick Carter, detective, suddenly appeared between its covers.

"Where's Dad?" repeated fourteen-year-old Mary, the oldest of the children, her gray eyes black with excitement and her bobbed hair flying in all directions. "Has he gone forward?"

"I'm going too," added Dave. He looked quite fierce in the dim light, his red unbrushed hair standing straight up on his head, without a necktie, his collar unbuttoned, and his shirt tails stuffed unceremoniously into his trousers.

Trix was wide awake by this time. She was too excited to dress, and climbed about the berth in her short white nightie and bare feet.

Two more shots were heard.

"Mother, we must go and see," cried Mary.

"Indeed you must not," I answered. "It might be a holdup. The trains are sometimes cut in two, and my end of it might be left here while your part went on."

I slid down on to the floor, sufficiently dressed as I thought, to be greeted with laughter by the two children.

"Now, Mother, you can't be a rock of Gibraltar

with your hair hanging down your back and the cañons between your skirt and waist only half hidden by your coat. I may go—say yes—of course I can," and Mary started down the aisle.

I grasped Dave by the arm. "Your father would be very angry if you went, Dave," I said.

"But, Mother, he told us always to stick together," objected Dave. "Let me run after her. We won't go far, I *promise* you. Please, Mother" —and without waiting for an answer he broke from my loosening grasp and rushed after Mary. Several men had gone to the front of the car, and I felt sure they would prevent the children from leaving it. I turned my attention to dressing Trix, who since the departure of Mary and Dave had decided that she wanted to have her clothes on.

All sorts of vague rumors began to float about. We heard that the train had gone off the track, that the express car had been entered by bandits, that we would all be robbed, perhaps murdered. Trix was enjoying it all thoroughly.

"Look at that lady, Mother," she giggled. "See, that one—she's holding her hair in her hands—she hasn't any on her head. And oh, Mother, what fat looking legs that one has."

I tried my best to subdue her interest in a stout gentleman with a hat on and little else. He was holding a set of false teeth in his hand. A young woman with gaily painted cheeks kept poking her head from between the curtains of her berth and calling for the porter, while a gentle elderly lady repeated over and over again, "Henry cannot stand

excitement unless he has his coffee. Can't I get some coffee somewhere?"

We were about to quiet down again when a shot rang out close by and a bullet whizzed through my window, breaking the glass. Instantly shrieks were heard on all sides. Trix and I were fortunately in the corridor of the car, and so were not hurt. But I confess to feeling strange and not a little anxious. Then came the sound of loud voices and a man in uniform, the Pullman conductor, entered the car followed by a little troop of passengers.

"Don't be alarmed, ladies," he said. "There has been a slight accident—the engine ran off the track and a gang of robbers tried to hold up the train, but we got one of them and the rest are gone. So you can all turn in again."

"Is any one hurt?" asked a woman's voice.

"Yes, the bandit we captured. No one else, I assure you. He is being attended to by a doctor. Is every one all right here?"

"Our berth is full of broken glass," I said. "A bullet went through the window."

The conductor was all interest in a moment. "You are sure that you are not hurt," he wanted to know. "Nothing broken except the window—nothing injured?"

I assured him that all was well.

"The porter must make your berth up again. Where is the porter, anyway?"

"He's probably in the linen closet praying for Lady Luck to help him," suggested Dave, who had joined us with Mary.

The conductor, who had evidently read the stories of Lady Luck and the Mascot Goat, laughed heartily, and then pressed the bell button several times. Presently the porter appeared. He was looking a little untidy and soiled, but assured the conductor that he had stuck by his car.

"I wouldn't leave mah car and mah passengers, boss," he repeated.

The conductor told him to make up the berth again and be quick about it.

"Be sure and let me know if anything was injured," was his parting word to me.

Every one had retired by this time behind the curtains, though there was a good deal of more or less quiet talking going on. I sent Mary and Dave, protesting, back to their berths. The porter kept up a steady stream of words:

"I told you all I wouldn't leave mah car. I always stick by mah passengers."

Trix and I were just settling down to rest when the Doctor appeared. Of course I wanted to know all the details at once. We left the indignant Trix in her berth and went out on to the platform. The door of the vestibule was open, and we could look out on a clear, cold, starry night amid a scene of rocky desolation. Great crags seemed to surround us on all sides, wonderful and wild—the mountains of our well loved New Mexico.

"It really has been an exciting night," said the Doctor. "The bandits had tampered with the rails, and if we had not been going slow around the curve we might all have gone to glory. As it was the

engine bumped along on the ties and stayed right side up, until brought to a stop. The clerk and messenger on the express car opened the door to see what was going on, and were confronted by two six-shooters. But the messenger is a husky fellow, over six feet and strong as an ox. He took a chance and jumped right on top of the men with the guns. There was some excitement for a few minutes, but of course the pistol shots brought the train crew running. Two of the bandits escaped, but the fellow the messenger had landed on never budged. He was squeezed nearly flat and had a bullet in his arm beside from his friend's revolver. And now comes the best part of the whole story—who do you think the bandit was? Just our old friend El Lobo, from New Mexico."

"It isn't possible!"

"Not possible, but it is, just the same. And what do you think he had strung on a chain about his neck? Nothing less than Mary's lost Indian ring."

"Now come," I said, "you are telling me the plot of a movie."

"I am not, it is the sure-enough truth. And you ought to have seen the ugly look he gave me when I claimed the ring."

"Have you got it?"

"No, they would not let me have it till I could prove my claim. We'll let Mary tell them in the morning."

The train must have remained stationary for a long time—long enough for a wrecking crew and a new engine to arrive and start us going again. But

we were all peacefully sleeping by that time. When the car finally awoke the next morning we were two hours late, and traveling along the high plateaus of Arizona. Distant mountains rimmed the horizon and great white clouds rose like snow peaks in the clear blue sky.

Trix and I were later than the others. For some time before I fully awoke I could hear as in a dream a steady stream of words, which gradually formed itself into a narrative in Mary's voice.

"It was when we were in New Mexico, last summer. We were digging in an Indian mound and I found an Indian ring with queer figures on it—sort of Chinese, you know. The Indians didn't want me to have it. They stole it twice, I think, and stole me, too. Finally we sent it home by registered mail, but we never heard of it again. We found the box that we had sent it in, though, broken open in a cave where some loot from a train robbery had been taken. And it was the same man who held up the train last night! El Lobo, they called him in Santa Fé. He must have taken my ring from the mail in the other train and have kept it all this time. Dad says he was wearing it around his neck last night, the ring—my ring, strung on a long silk cord. Isn't it wonderful to think I'll get it back? The Indians have all sorts of legends connected with it. And a man who knows all about such things says it has Chinese characters on it. It is supposed to be unlucky to wear it—for a white person, you know."

I stuck my head out from between the curtains and saw that Mary was sitting with a gentleman and lady

in one of the double seats which had been put in daytime form by the porter. It was after nine o'clock.

"Well, Mother, are you awake at last?" called Mary, and ran over to kiss me good morning. "Father and Dave and I had breakfast a long time ago. And, oh, Mother, did Dad tell you about finding my ring again, and El Lobo?"

Then whispering in my ear, she went on: "I have been talking to the nicest people! They live in Los Angeles, and hope we'll come to visit them. They haven't any children, but love them. He was in France in the war doing Y. M. C. A. work. He's just coming home from Germany, and she went over to meet him. Their name is Norton."

"Wait till I am dressed to introduce me," I broke in laughingly. Trix was clamoring for help behind me, and insisted on my buttoning her up at once.

"You had better hurry or there won't be any breakfast, Mother," Mary said as she went back to her friends.

Fortunately we found plenty of food in the dining car, also David and the Doctor, who were still eating griddle cakes and discussing the adventure of the night before. El Lobo, the captured train robber, had been quite badly hurt, and the Doctor had been called upon earlier in the morning to attend him.

"There is no doubt but that it is our old friend of Santa Fé. He was part Chinese, you remember, which added to his Mexican-Indian ancestry gives him a very oriental look. There is equally no doubt that he had around his neck a peculiar Chinese cord

which carried Mary's Indian ring. I think we can get it back. But seriously, my dear, I wonder if it would not be better to leave it with El Lobo. It sounds absurd and like a dime novel, I know. But we had trouble enough with the thing in New Mexico last summer. Perhaps El Lobo has as much right to it as we have."

"Why, Dad," exclaimed Dave, "Mary found it in the Indian mound. Of course it's hers! And you wouldn't let an old train robber get it away from us. You ought to be ashamed of being such a scare-cat."

"Mary will want it back," observed Trixy, from the bottom of a bowl of cereal.

Trix was right. There was no doubt that Mary wanted it back. So the Doctor put in a claim describing the ring, and how it had been lost from the registered mail six months ago, in New Mexico. Mary went with her father to identify the ring, and returned feeling a little uncomfortable.

"Mother, I can't imagine why I thought him handsome, when we saw him in Santa Fé. He is dreadful looking. They took the ring off him, but if he hadn't been so badly hurt I don't believe they could have. He didn't want to give it up a bit, you could see that."

"I think we had better let him have it," I observed, looking at my fourteen-year-old daughter with a feeling of discomfort and almost of foreboding. The ring had cost her enough danger before. Why should she be mixed up in some old oriental superstition?

But the matter was taken out of our hands, in a

way. For while we were flying over the plains and approaching Williams, the bandit suffered a severe hemorrhage and was removed from the train. So the ring was given us by the conductor, together with the cord of red and black silk which had held it.

We were late in arriving in the little town of Williams, and the train for the Grand Cañon, whither we were bound, was made up and ready to go. Mr. and Mrs. Norton, to whom Mary had introduced us, were also planning to leave the through train and go to the cañon. We hurried off with our bags, leaving our trunks to go on without us. We had only time to snatch some sandwiches and fruit and get on the branch train, when we were off, full of anticipation and excitement.

CHAPTER II

FIRST SIGHT OF THE GRAND CAÑON—A NEW INDIAN FRIEND

WE sat on the steps of the back platform of the rear car and got our first glimpse of the real cattle country. The great rolling plain stretched away for miles, dotted here and there with thickets, and with low mountains in the distance.

Here we saw the first prairie dogs of the trip. They ran in and out of the brush or sat on their sandy mound houses, with forepaws folded over their fat stomachs. Herds of red cattle, with pleasant white faces, grazed about and watched the train with quiet curiosity as we passed.

Once when the train stopped, Dave called our attention to a heap of skeletons and bones near the track.

"What are they, Daddy?" he asked.

"I am afraid it is all that is left of a bunch of cattle that probably died of starvation and cold last winter."

"But, Daddy, how terrible. Couldn't anything be done for them?"

"I think so, and Uncle Sam thinks so," was the answer. "On the government ranges there are shelters and the herds are fed and watched during the

winter storms. But a great many ranch owners do not seem to care, or fail to realize how much the poor creatures must suffer before they are finally reduced to the heap of bones you see here. These men claim that it would cost too much to care for the stock. They prefer to lose a number each year. But even if it were not so cruel, it would be poor policy. For the poor survivors are in bad shape to send to market and the cows are often too weak to have healthy calves, so that the herds do not increase normally."

"I can't bear to think of the poor things wandering around in the snow," said Mary. "Do you remember that dreadful picture of the sheep all huddled together, lost in a blizzard? I always have hated to look at it. I suppose cattle would be just the same. Can't the ranchers be forced to do something?"

"I think conditions are improving. Humane societies have taken up the cause, and the government ranges are an object lesson. Of course some cattle will stray away and be lost. That cannot be helped. It must have been the same in their wild state before men assumed responsibility for their care. The shipping of cattle, too, is being looked after more than ever before. In old days the cattle cars that took the creatures east to be slaughtered were so crowded that many of the animals were trampled and died on the way. They were often left for days without food or water. But now laws have been passed for the protection of animals. Of course thoughtless and inhuman shippers break the law. If they are

caught they can be punished, but it takes constant watching."

"Sometimes I feel like never eating any meat again," said Mary slowly.

"I think we all do when we stop to think," I remarked.

"Would you like to be a Buddhist, Mary?" asked her father. "They believe that they must not take the life of any living thing."

"Not even flies and mosquitoes and ants and spiders?" Dave demanded.

"No orthodox Buddhist will kill anything," replied the Doctor.

"Not even if they bit him?" said Trix.

"My physiology book says insects are more dangerous and kill more people than battles," remarked Dave.

"I wouldn't like to be a Buddhist to that extent, Dad," laughed Mary.

"Let's go in," suggested the Doctor. "It's a case of ashes to ashes, dust to dust; If the smoke doesn't get me, the cinders must."

"I feel as black as the ace of spades," I responded.

We went into the car and found Mr. and Mrs. Norton. They, like ourselves, were to visit the Grand Cañon for the first time.

"I understand that there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world," said Mr. Norton. "Most mountains you look up to, but here you look down on the tops of them. You plan to go down into the cañon, do you not?"

"Surely," we replied in chorus.

"Did you bring any riding togs?" asked Mrs. Norton. "I understand no one is allowed to go down into the cañon in skirts. The mules have a special dislike for skirts ever since a very fat woman rode down in them. Her donkey, looking around inquiringly on feeling the heavy weight, mistook her billowy skirt for something strange and dangerous. He shied, with terrible consequences."

"What happened?" demanded Dave breathlessly.

"Well, I don't know that anything happened, but the story is that the lady went over the bank. A strong wind happened to be blowing and it filled her skirt like a balloon. So when the scared mule reached the end of the trail at breakneck speed, he found the lady sitting at the bottom, breathless and red in the face, but quite unhurt by her marvelous descent. The mule seemed to think that dangerous medicine, as our Indian friends would say, was somehow mixed up in that skirt and lady. He turned about and went back over the trail alone. Since then, the rule is, no skirts in the cañon."

"But what happened to the fat lady?" asked Trix, wide-eyed with amazement, "and is it true?"

"Well, I haven't heard that she is to be seen at the bottom, nor does her ghost haunt the river, so I suppose she must somehow have gotten back to the top. But I never heard that part of the story."

"What is the fashion in clothes?" asked the Doctor, laughing.

"I have heard that it is blue denim divided skirts and farmers' hats, becoming to the young and slim," answered Mr. Norton.

There were some audible sighs from those of us who were not slim.

"I wish I had brought my riding trousers," said Mary sadly. "I hate the thought of denim things."

Not long after this the train rolled into the cañon station. We drove up a short, steep slope in a big bus to the attractive low wooden hotel.

"Oh, Mother," said Trix, "there's a house like the pueblo at Taos; look quick."

"Why quick?" asked Dave. "It won't run away."

I looked in the direction toward which Trix pointed. Sure enough, an Indian house, of the pueblo type, stood within sight of the hotel. It was built of stone, and had several stories.

"I want to go there," said Trix.

"Later, mañana," said the Doctor.

We wandered through the big hotel living rooms, built attractively of dark wood. While the Doctor was negotiating for accommodations we went into a side parlor, where Mary discovered some paintings, of great cliffs and vast abysses, of strange colors and forms, a mixture of Egyptian temple and rocky mountains.

"Mother, they are wonderful, but what are they, and could anything be like that? Could there be mountains with all those colors?"

"It doesn't seem possible, but we'll wait and see," I answered.

Presently the Doctor hailed us. "Let's have our first view of the cañon now," he called. "Then we'll have a quick wash and a quick supper and go

to Sentinel Place for the sunset. I am told it is well worth doing."

"I want to see the Indian house," remarked Trix.

"You shall see it afterward," said her father.

It was only a short walk from the hotel and tourists, and commonplace things. Then we stood looking breathlessly over the stone parapet into the great cañon.

"There is nothing else like it on earth"—the words seemed to ring in my head.

"I am not sure whether it's heaven or the other place," I heard the Doctor say, half under his breath.

"Mother, it is like the pictures in the hotel," exclaimed Mary. "Those great things down there are like Egyptian figures and pyramids—it is partly the colors. I never saw anything like it."

"No, I don't suppose any of us have," I answered.

"How far across is it? What made it?" asked Dave.

"The Colorado River is responsible, under God," replied the Doctor gravely.

"Mother, I'm scared," whispered Trix, and hid her head against me. "Can't I go to the Indian house?" she asked in a very small voice.

"I'll go with her," said Dave.

"I'm almost afraid to trust you two alone here," I said. "It's absurd, I know, but Trix is so small and the cañon so huge."

"My, ain't nature grand," observed Dave.

"Oh, run along and keep away from the edge," said the Doctor. "I'll come for you shortly. We ought to get back to supper."

I watched them run off together and then turned back to the cañon lying below us, so immovable, brilliant.

"How deep is it, Daddy?" asked Mary.

"Seven miles by trail and eight miles across. We don't see the river at the bottom from here, they tell me. Just look across at the flat plain on the other side. Think of the feelings the first Indian must have had who galloped across the plain and came suddenly to the edge."

"I bet he prayed to the Great Spirit! I hope it wasn't at night," responded Mary cheerfully.

"Well, I suppose we'd better go back to the hotel," said the Doctor. "We can go by way of the Hopi Indian house and pick up the children. I declare," he added, "I don't see Trix riding down the trail to-morrow. What shall we do with her?"

We went into the Indian house, which was much more beautiful inside than the pueblo in New Mexico had been. Skins hung on the walls, and finely woven rugs and pottery were placed about to be looked at and, if possible, sold. Trix and Dave were talking with a fine-looking Indian in native costume.

Trix ran to us immediately. "Come and talk to him. He's awfully nice," she whispered quite audibly.

"Does he talk English?" we asked.

"Yes, indeed. Do come, Mother. He has a boy just my age. Can I go and see him? He wants me to."

We joined Dave and his new friend.

"I hope the children have not bothered you," I began.

"No, indeed," was the quiet answer. "They are good children. The little girl is coming to see my boy, if you will allow it."

"Are you a Carlisle graduate?" asked the Doctor.

"No, but I am a college graduate. A real Indian, too," he added in response to a disappointed grunt from Dave.

"Would you like to know my Indian name?"

"Please tell us," cried Trix.

"It is Oh-we-tahuh—they call me that because I have made little paintings. It means picture writing. Before I went to college they called me Mo-wa-thé, which means flash of light, because I was a quick runner."

"It is a pretty name—Mo-wa-thé. We'll have to call Dave that," I said.

"Now, Mother," said Dave. While the Indian asked:

"Is he a good runner?"

"Aw, nothing much," answered Dave quickly.

"How do you happen to be here in Indian dress?" asked Mary.

"I came back to live with my people; and because I could not live away from the cañon. But I do not always wear the dress. My boy wears an Indian suit made by Montgomery Sears," he added, looking at me with twinkling eyes.

"What a pity," I murmured.

"Are you going down into the cañon to-morrow?" asked our new friend.

"Sure," was Dave's quick reply.

"I am not sure about the little one," observed the Doctor.

"She can stay with my wife and boy, if you will allow it," said the Indian. "We live not far from here in a log cabin. Wouldn't you like to?" he added, turning to Trix. "They will tell you stories of the Hopis. And my boy, Tom, will make you a bow and arrows."

"Mother, Dad, may I?" begged Trix.

"Don't you want to ride down into the cañon?" I asked.

"I'd rather play with the boy. Has he been down in the cañon?"

"Yes," answered the Indian. "But he is a boy, and has always lived here. It is a hard trip for a little white girl."

"Suppose we think it over," suggested the Doctor. "We ought to go and eat supper now. It is very kind of you to offer. I will come in this evening, if I may, and discuss it. Will you be here?"

"Yes, I tell the people who come to see the dance about some of the customs of our people. I will be here."

We thanked him, and went over to the hotel.

Dinner in the big dining room was very welcome, as every one was hungry. Trixy could not read most of the menu, but finally found ice cream and was sure she wanted that for supper.

"Can't I have just that?" she pleaded. "I want to go back to the Indian house."

"It's almost bedtime now, Trix," said her father.

"You will have so many things to see to-morrow that you will have to turn in early. Come, eat your toast and milk, like a good girl, and then you can have the ice cream."

We met Mr. and Mrs. Norton in the living room after supper.

"Can't Trix stay with me till her bedtime?" she asked. "I am not going out again to-night. Children Trix's age do not as a rule care for scenery."

"Let me stay too, Mother," said Dave. "I'll look after Trix, and take her up to bed at the right time, too."

"Well, all right, you can stay. Mrs. Norton, you certainly are more than kind. I am afraid you don't know how much you have undertaken. Will you remind them at half past seven, and Trix, will you go up with Dave just as soon as Mrs. Norton tells you?"

"I want to go to the Indian house and see the boy," responded Trix.

"Be a good girl to-night and you can go to-morrow to see the Indians."

"Of course she'll be good with me, won't you, Trixy?" asked Dave.

"She'll be good after you're gone," suggested Mrs. Norton.

So Mary, the Doctor, and I hastened away.

The sun was very near the horizon as we went along the road, past the cottages at the head of the trail that we were to take the next day, and entered the grove of high trees that cover Sentinel Point.

"It's a race with the sun, Mother," laughed Mary, and she ran ahead at a dogtrot.

It was all so silent and mysterious as the shadows of the evening gathered. We reached the great stone monument, just as the sun disappeared.

"I feel as though I were a princess in a fairy tale, and that something terrible would happen if I didn't get here on time," puffed Mary. "Maybe I'll turn into a swan or something. But, Mother, just look down."

From the stone base of the monument we could look into what seemed a bottomless chasm, full of purple and blue shadows, with here and there a glint of bright red or yellow as the last rays of the sun fell on some rocky pinnacle.

"Domes, minarets, and towers—it is an Indian city or an Egyptian temple, made for some of the gods of the heathen," said the Doctor.

We sat for a while at the edge of the cañon. As the shadows deepened it seemed almost as if we would be drawn down into the dark mystery below. The pine trees at our feet stuck out over endless depths. The soft colors of the rocks turned into dark reds and blues and purples in the gathering gloom.

"It can never be more wonderful than it is now. I am almost regretting going down to-morrow. It seems as though it would give us too much familiarity with this great marvel," I said.

"I hadn't any idea that it would be like this," said Mary. "I can't quite believe it."

It was almost dark before we rose and left the

monument which would have seemed massive anywhere, and even here was impressive in its simplicity.

"Father, who was Major Powell, that the monument is to?" asked Mary, as we started back.

"He was the first white man and probably the first man of any color to explore the Colorado River through the cañons. I saw his journal somewhere in the hotel. I think it would be a mighty good thing to look at before we leave here. The Indians warned him that it was an impossible trip, that the river ran underground in some places and that all sorts of waterfalls and rapids would block their way. It is a thrilling story. They certainly found plenty of adventures."

"Can we go to the Hopi house and see the dance?" asked Mary, as we approached the hotel.

"You go ahead and we'll follow. I think we ought to stop and see how Dave and Trix have fared," I answered.

So Mary hurried on and we sought the hotel and our rooms. Much to our surprise, these proved to be empty. Not a trace could be found of either of the children, the beds had not been touched, and the floor was not covered with the usual odds and ends of Trix's garments; a sure sign that these must still be on her small person somewhere else.

"Where can they be? Surely nothing can have happened to them," I said.

"I fancy we shall find them at the Hopi house," said the Doctor. "If you remember, that was the last thing Trix was saying as we left. She wanted to go to the Indians."

"We would better go right over and see," I replied. And over we went as fast as we could.

There was quite a crowd of people in the two big rooms, and in the center were three Indians, doing a corn-husking dance, while our friend of the forenoon sang the corn song. We saw Mary at once, but it was only after a careful search that we discovered Trix and Dave, with a small Indian boy, concealed behind a little crowd of onlookers.

The Doctor routed them out. "Dave, what do you mean?" he asked. "Didn't you know you were to get Trix to bed? How came you here?"

"I couldn't do anything with her," answered Dave. "She ran away and I thought you would rather have me come with her. I knew she ought not to come."

"Both of you go right back to bed," said the Doctor sternly.

"But, Dad, it isn't my bedtime—"

"Can't we see the end of the dance?" added Trix.

"No. You must both go home. I see you are neither of you to be trusted."

"I will go home with them," I remarked.

"We had better interview our Indian friend. Trix must not go down into the cañon. She is not old enough. I am not sure that Dave is."

"We'll see how he behaves from now till tomorrow," added the Doctor.

So I convoyed my two erring young ones to the hotel and this time saw them safely tucked in. Dave seemed a little subdued at the possibility of losing the ride on the morrow. But Trix could not remain

depressed for long. She began by giving a lively imitation of the Indian dance, singing a weird tune of her own which closely resembled the corn-grinding song as far as I could tell. This she did in the costume which is common to all primitive people, before they have learned from somewhere that one must wear clothes in public.

I could not keep from laughing, and Trix shrieked with delight and started to run into the hall. But I quickly put a stop to this, and presently I left her still chanting strange words in the darkness from the safety of her bed.

Mary and the Doctor came back in great excitement from the Hopi house.

"It wasn't so much the dance, but our Indian, he was simply great, Mother. He was dressed in the most beautiful blankets. And after the song, he told us about his people. He was wonderful. And he is going to take Trix to-morrow and he has a darling little boy."

"Could you tell your mother what he said?" asked her father.

"Oh, I don't know—not as he told it. He has such a beautiful voice. He told us how for days before a wedding the bride has to grind corn on a stone. She sits behind a blanket and sings the grinding song and makes prayers. And then when the wedding day comes, they don't have a priest or anything, but the bride and groom sit quietly among their relations. And then he puts a cloak over her shoulders and serves her out of a dish, and they both eat out of the same dish and drink out of the same

cup. It means that they will always share things and that he will care for her. The man has to work, too, before the wedding. He has to work in her father's fields or in some way prove his friendship and love.

"He told us about the old sign of his people which was like a cross and meant the Father Sun and Mother Moon and the Morning Star. Morning Star is the son of Mother Moon. He is in the sky when she goes away, and he calls Father Sun to come and smile on the Earth for people. It sounds almost like Christians, doesn't it, Mother? He told us another legend.

" 'The thing I tell is the true thing!' he said.

" 'It was time for a god to walk on the earth, and one was born of the piñon tree and a virgin who rested under the shadow of its arms. The girl was very poor, and her people were very poor; when the piñon nut fell in her bosom, and the winds told her a son was sent to her to rest beneath her heart, she was very sad, for there was no food.

" 'But wonderful things happened. The spirits of the mountain brought to her home new and strange food, and seeds to plant for harvest:—new seeds of the melon, and big seed of the corn:—before that time the seeds of the corn were little seeds. When the child was born, strange things happened, and the eagles flew high above till the sky was alive with wings. The boy was very poor, and so much a boy of dreams that he was the one to be laughed at for the visions. But great wise thoughts grew out of his mountain dreams, and he was so great a wizard that the old men chose him for Po-Ahtun-ho, which means Ruler of Things from the Beginning. And the dreamer who had been born of the maid

and the piñon tree was the Ruler. He governed even the boiling water from the heart of the hills, and taught the people that the sickness was washed away by it. His wisdom was beyond earth wisdom, and his visions were true. The land of that people became a great land, and they had many blue stones and shells. It then was that they became proud. One day the god came as a stranger to their village—a poor stranger, and they were not kind to him! The proud hearts had grown to be hard hearts, and only fine strangers would they talk with. He went away from that people then. He said hard words to them and went away. He went to the South to live in a great home in the sea. When he comes back they do not know, but some day he comes back,—or some night! He said he would come back to the land when the stars mark the time when they repent, and one night in seven the fire is lit on the hills by the villages, that the earth-born god, Po-se-yemo, may see it if he should come, and may see that his people are faithful and are waiting for him to come.

" 'Because of the day when the god came, and they turned him away for that his robe was poor, and his feet were bare;—because of that day, no poor person is turned hungry from the door of that people. And the old men say this is because the god may come any day from the South, and may come again as a poor man.' "

"It seems as though somehow those Indians must have heard about Christ, doesn't it? Perhaps some missionaries we don't know about told them."

"I don't think so, Mary," answered the Doctor. "But most religions have things in common. And the early fathers of the Christian Church borrowed a lot of things from other beliefs."

"Somehow I don't like that. It makes it seem less true—"

"What less true? You mean Christianity? Why, Mary, don't you see, it makes it all the truer. If God has sent the same message to all people, why, we surely must believe."

"That Indian must be pretty fine. I wish I could have heard him. But I like to hear it from you, too, Mary," I said. "You think he will be perfectly trustworthy, and that Trix will be all right? What did he say about that?"

"He said his little boy would come for Trix about seven-thirty—we make an early start. He will have her here by the time we get back. He promises to take good care of her and give her a little walk down the trail. They tell me at the hotel that he is a remarkably fine man and absolutely to be trusted. Also the cow puncher who is to escort us to-morrow does not encourage the going down of youngsters. So I guess this is the only solution."

"Where did you say that Powell book is?" asked Mary.

"It's too late to-night," said her father. "Go to bed now and we'll take Major Powell down to the bottom of the cañon and read him while we are resting. Good night, everybody."

"Oh, Mother, must I? I am not a bit sleepy or tired."

"Good night, everybody," was the only answer.

CHAPTER III

ON DONKEY BACK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE CAÑON

OH, Mother, Mother, I never did see anything so funny. Oh, I am so glad I can wear my gym bloomers. You must look at yourself. Where's Dad and Dave?" Thus Mary exclaimed on seeing me dressed in the safe and comfortable clothes which the hotel provided for the cañon trip. If only they could have been becoming, too! But a large blue denim divided skirt and a big straw hat were not the things I would have chosen to wear. I envied Mary her trim brown bloomers and Dave and his father their trousers and gaiters.

"Laugh all you like," I remarked. "It is better to make people laugh than cry. Come on—we might as well get started."

"Mother's in a hurry to show off her beautiful riding clothes," laughed Mary.

"Mother's all right," said Dave stoutly. "She's just as pretty as she can be."

So with this to comfort me we went out. I was glad to find two other ladies dressed as I was. Mrs. Norton, however, had come fully prepared, and wore a riding suit of corduroy.

We all went over to the paddock, where were assembled the most wicked looking lot of mules that I have ever seen together.

A cow puncher, dressed as a cow puncher should,

with woolly chaps, brown shirt, red kerchief, and a Stetson hat, awaited us. He looked us over, asked us whether we were accustomed to riding, and then selected our mounts. There was one large, dark brown creature with one ear up and one down, whose eye had a particularly bad expression. I watched the cow puncher lead him toward me and wished that I was not so heavy and could have had a small, gentle-looking bay mule. But it was not to be. The Doctor and our guide came to my assistance, and before I knew it, I was hoisted up into the saddle of the largest animal. I felt as though I were on top of an elephant.

Then we started. First came the cow puncher, then Mary, then Mrs. Norton, then I, and the others trailed behind. Mr. Norton and Dave brought up the rear. The mules were inclined to be a little frisky at the start, and playfully kicked their back legs and bit each other. But the guide, Franklin, assured us that they would behave on the trail. I hoped he was right.

As we rode slowly toward the cabins at the head of the trail, two small children jumped out of the bushes with a war whoop, which sent our mules into hysterics. It was Trix and her young Indian friend.

"Oh, Mother, can't I come too? I'd love to ride on one of those donkeys. Are they donkeys, Mother, or mules? Can't I come?"

"Don't speak to Mother. She can't talk and ride too," called out Mary.

"Good-by, Trix, be ready to take care of us when we come back," said the Doctor.

The children waved good-by, and then I forgot them and everything as we turned into the trail.

"Do you remember going down into the Rio Grande Cañon?" asked Mary.

"I wish I were there now," I murmured.

"Well, I wouldn't do this again for a million dollars," said Mrs. Norton. "And they say it's much worse farther down."

We seemed to be slowly descending the side of a house on a path just wide enough for one mule at a time and with no parapet, not even a stone, on the side toward the abyss—one false step!

"Don't be skeered," observed Franklin. "Those mules don't wanter commit suicide. They'll stay on the path. Just leave 'em alone. Don't try to guide 'em. They know how to go better'n you do. They've been down oftener."

"Thank Heaven I am not a mule," observed some one.

"Why, Mother, you're not scared, are you?" asked Mary.

"Scared? I never was so scared in my life. All I can do is to shut my eyes and hold on to the pommel of my saddle."

"Same here," said Mrs. Norton cheerfully.

Down, down went the mules, and down went we. After a while I trusted myself to look around. Far below us wound the trail like a thread. We could not see the river yet. All around us were the wild cliffs and mesa-shaped mountains of the cañon with their gay colors. There were few trees, and only patches of shrubbery.

We saw some wild burros, or donkeys, climbing up some of the steepest looking precipices. They watched us curiously and then scampered off. Their color was so much like the gray of the cliffs that it was hard to see them.

Presently Franklin called a halt. The mules' heads were turned toward the chasm and they stood across the trail. The Doctor walked forward, having persuaded Mr. Norton to guard his mule, and joined us.

"How do you like it?" he asked. "Getting on all right?"

"Mother's 'frightened out of her wicks,' as Trix used to say," observed Mary. "I think it's great. I say— Whoa, where do you think you are going?" she added, as her mule, tempted by a bit of shrubbery that hung over the edge, started after it.

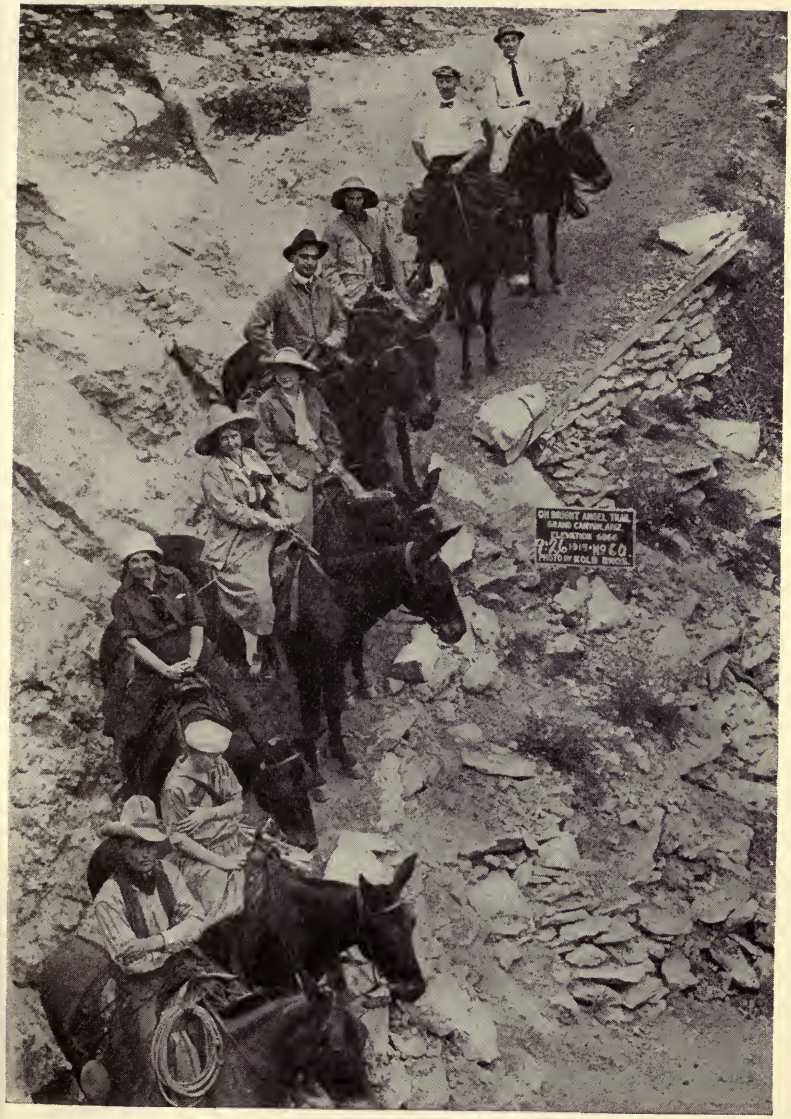
"Aw, he's all right," said the cow puncher. "He don't want to tumble and kill himself. He just wants a leaf or two for his breakfast. Hi, get back, you sinner," he addressed the mule. "Hi, Jack you fiend, get back where you belong. Pull him back,"— this to Mary.

"Pull him back! He's got a mouth like iron. I can't budge him. Oh, let him eat."

Presently Franklin kicked his mule and started down the trail again.

"I don't know why I stay on this beast and don't roll off. I feel myself swaying from side to side," observed Mrs. Norton.

"My mule is wider than the span of a bridge.



THE MULES' HEADS WERE TURNED TOWARD THE CHASM
(Photo from Kolb Brothers)

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THE PAGEANT AT MILLS COLLEGE

My legs seem to stick out straight in the air," I replied.

"Well, we can live till we reach the first level resting space, anyway," said Mrs. Norton. "We can stay there if we want to."

"Do you want to?" asked Mary.

"I wouldn't think of it," was the chorus. "Imagine going halfway down and then stopping."

Presently we came to a grassy level place, with some ruined shacks on it. Here every one dismounted, some gracefully and some with considerable help from Franklin. Those who were accustomed to riding walked about, but Mrs. Norton and I stretched out on the ground.

"Will you ever be able to get up again?" murmured Mrs. Norton.

"I would prefer a feather bed," I replied.

Presently the party started again. And now the cañon grew wilder and more wonderful. Looking upward, the great cliffs towered above us, immeasurably high, while the depths below seemed just as overpowering.

"I simply won't ride down that next bend," said Mrs. Norton firmly. "It's impossibly steep and there's no safe side. The trail is like a bridge."

"Oh, Mother," called Mary, "Mr. Franklin says this is the Devil's Corkscrew, and we've all got to get off."

"You see, I was right," observed Mrs. Norton. "It couldn't be done."

"Mr. Franklin says to hang on to your mules. If

you let go they are likely to go home alone," said Mary.

"Bad 'cess to them, I wish they would," murmured Mrs. Norton.

"But you wouldn't want to walk up all the way, would you?" asked Mary. "I asked Mr. Franklin about the fat woman in skirts who blew down, Mrs. Norton. He said he never heard of her. But he said there was a man who tried to make his mule take a short cut. It was like a tug of war 'cause the mule wouldn't budge. Finally the bridle broke and the man tumbled down the cliff and broke his arm. Mr. Franklin says the mules have lots of sense."

We passed a stream near the bottom, and then the trail broke through a barrier of rocks and there was the Colorado River, brown and turbulent, and flowing with a mighty current between sandy shores and high crags.

"And to think that is what made it all," said Mr. Norton, who had joined us.

"A thousand years here are truly but as yesterday. A river is a wonderful thing, Mary. No nation, however great, could have made this cañon, and yet that muddy stream did it all."

"Could one swim across?" asked Mary. "It's not very wide—"

"Do you remember trying to swim in the Rio Grande?" remarked the Doctor.

"Well, I guess I do. We just hung on to the rocks for dear life."

"This has a much stronger current. Come, let's

sit down and while we eat our lunch, let me read you a bit from Major Powell's adventures."

"Can't we explore a little first?" asked Dave.

"No, we'll read and rest and eat and then explore," was the answer as his father took a small volume from his pocket.

"Major Powell," he began, "started with nine men and four boats and went a thousand miles through the cañons. Here are some of the dangers he encountered as he tells them in his own journal.

" 'On this beach we camp for the night. We find a few sticks, which have lodged in the rocks. It is raining hard, and we have no shelter, but kindle a fire and have our supper. We sit on the rocks all night, wrapped in our ponchos, getting what sleep we can.

" 'August 15. This morning we find we can let down for three or four hundred yards, and it is managed in this way: We pass along the wall, by climbing from projecting point to point, sometimes near the water's edge, at other places fifty or sixty feet above, and hold the boat with a line, while two men remain aboard, and prevent her from being dashed against the rocks, and keep the line from getting caught on the wall. In two hours we have brought them all down, as far as it is possible, in this way. A few yards below, the river strikes with great violence against a projecting rock, and our boats are pulled up in a little bay above. We must now manage to pull out of this, and clear the point below. The little boat is held by the bow obliquely up the stream. We jump in, and pull out only a few strokes, and sweep clear of the dangerous rock. The other boats follow in the same manner, and the rapid is passed.

" 'It is not easy to describe the labor of such navigation. We must prevent the waves from dashing the boats against the cliffs. Sometimes, where the river is swift, we must put a bight of rope about a rock, to prevent her being snatched from us by a wave; but where the plunge is too great, or the chute too swift, we must let her leap, and catch her below, or the undertow will drag her under the falling water, and she sinks. Where we wish to run her out a little way from shore, through a channel between rocks, we first throw in little sticks of driftwood, and watch their course, to see where we must steer, so that she will pass the channel in safety. And so we hold, and let go, and pull, and lift, and ward, among rocks, around rocks, and over rocks.

" 'And now we go on through this solemn, mysterious way. The river is very deep, the cañon very narrow, and still obstructed, so that there is no steady flow of the stream; but the waters wheel, and roll, and boil, and we are scarcely able to determine where we can go. Now, the boat is carried to the right, perhaps close to the wall; again, she is shot into the stream, and perhaps is dragged over to the other side, where, caught in a whirlpool, she spins about. We can neither land nor run as we please. The boats are entirely unmanageable; no order in their running can be preserved; now one, now another, is ahead, each crew laboring for its own preservation. In such a place we come to another rapid. Two of the boats run it perforce. One succeeds in landing, but there is no foothold by which to make a portage, and she is pushed out again into the stream. The next minute a great reflex wave fills the open compartment; she is water-logged, and drifts unmanageable. Breaker after breaker rolls over her, and one capsizes her. The men are thrown out; but they cling to the boat, and she

drifts down some distance, alongside of us, and we are able to catch her. She is soon bailed out, and the men are aboard once more; but the oars are lost, so a pair from the *Emma Dean* is spared. Then for two miles we find smooth water.

" 'Clouds are playing in the cañon to-day. Sometimes they roll down in great masses, filling the gorge with gloom; sometimes they hang above, from wall to wall, and cover the cañon with a roof of impending storm; and we can peer long distances up and down this cañon corridor, with its cloud-roof overhead, its walls of black granite, and its river bright with the sheen of broken waters. Then, a gust of wind sweeps down a side gulch, and, making a rift in the clouds, reveals the blue heavens, and a stream of sunlight pours in. Then, the clouds drift away into the distance and hang around crags, and peaks, and pinnacles, and towers, and walls, and cover them with a mantle that lifts from time to time and sets them all in sharp relief. Then, baby clouds creep out of side cañons, glide around points, and creep back again, into more distant gorges. Then, clouds, set in strata, across the cañon, with intervening vista views, to cliffs and rocks beyond. The clouds are children of the heavens, and when they play among the rocks, they lift them to the region above.

" 'It rains! Rapidly little rills are formed above, and these soon grow into brooks, and the brooks grow into creeks, and tumble over the walls in innumerable cascades, adding their wild music to the roar of the river. When the rain ceases, the rills, brooks, and creeks run dry. The waters that fall, during a rain, on these steep rocks, are gathered at once into the river; they could scarcely be poured in more suddenly, if some vast spout ran from the clouds to the stream itself. When a storm bursts

over the cañon, a side gulch is dangerous, for a sudden flood may come, and the inpouring waters will raise the river, so as to hide the rocks before your eyes.

" 'Early in the afternoon, we discover a stream entering from the north, a clear, beautiful creek, coming down through a gorgeous red cañon. We land, and camp on a sand beach, above its mouth, under a great, overspreading tree, with willow-shaped leaves.'

"That gives you a pretty good idea of some of the things Powell had to contend with. He finally lost a boat and three of his party deserted. But he was not one to turn back."

"Why did he do it, Dad?" asked Dave. "I mean, what was the good of it?"

"Well, if it were not for men like Powell, how do you suppose geographies could be made, and natural histories written and botanies composed? That is the practical use of it. But can't you imagine how a man feels who has gone to places that no eye but his has seen and no other foot has trod? Do you know Kipling's poem, 'The Explorer'?

" 'Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated—so:
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!" '

"You know you loved to ride off alone in New Mexico last summer, Dave. You were always wanting to explore."

"Oh, Dad, it must have been glorious to do what Powell did," said Mary.

"Did he find any bones and things?" asked Dave.

"He found pueblo ruins and pottery. He tells about it in a short and amusing chapter."

We had finished our lunch by this time, and were glad to listen to a little more of Powell's romance.

" 'Late in the afternoon I return, and go up a little gulch, just above this creek, about two hundred yards from camp, and discover the ruins of two or three old houses, which were originally of stone, laid in mortar. Only the foundations are left, but irregular blocks, of which the houses were constructed, lie scattered about. In one room I find an old mealing stone, deeply worn, as if it had been much used. A great deal of pottery is strewn around, and old trails, which in some places are deeply worn into the rocks, are seen.

" 'It is ever a source of wonder to us why these ancient people sought such inaccessible places for their homes. They were, doubtless, an agricultural race, but there are no lands here, of any considerable extent, that they could have cultivated. To the west of Oraiby, one of the towns in the "Province of Tusayan," in Northern Arizona, the inhabitants have actually built little terraces along the face of the cliff, where a spring gushes out, and thus made their sites for gardens. It is possible that the ancient inhabitants of this place made their agricultural lands in the same way. But why should they seek such spots? Surely the country was not so crowded with population as to demand the utilization of so barren a region. The only solution of the problem suggested is this: We know that, for a century or two after the settlement of Mexico, many expeditions were sent into the country now comprised in Arizona and New Mexico, for the purpose of bringing the town-building people

under the dominion of the Spanish government. Many of their villages were destroyed, and the inhabitants fled to regions at that time unknown; and there are traditions, among the people who inhabit the *pueblos* that still remain, that the cañons were these unknown lands. Maybe these buildings were erected at that time; sure it is that they have a much more modern appearance than the ruins scattered over Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. Those old Spanish conquerors had a monstrous greed for gold, and a wonderful lust for saving souls. Treasures they must have; if not on earth, why, then, in heaven; and when they failed to find heathen temples, bedecked with silver, they propitiated Heaven by seizing the heathen themselves. There is yet extant a copy of a record, made by a heathen artist, to express his conception of the demands of the conquerors. In one part of the picture we have a lake, and near by stands a priest pouring water on the head of a native. On the other side, a poor Indian has a cord about his throat. Lines run from these two groups to a central figure, a man with beard, and full Spanish panoply. The interpretation of the picture writing is this: "Be baptized, as this saved heathen; or be hanged, as that damned heathen." Doubtless, some of these people preferred a third alternative, and, rather than be baptized or hanged, they chose to be imprisoned within these cañon walls.' "

"Those poor Indians," remarked Mary. "Do you remember that story, 'The House of the Dawn,' we read last winter, and how the Spaniards forced the Indians to work in the mines and beat them and made them slaves?"

"That was a bully story," said Dave.

"It wasn't only the Spaniards that treated the

Indians badly. Only they had a gentler, finer type of people to deal with, and that made their cruelty more inexcusable. If it had been the Apaches now —but it is hard to forgive them their treatment of the Hopis and the Pueblos. Well, I suppose we must be going up soon. Certainly from here we would never believe in the wonderful sights above us. This looks very much like our old friend the Rio Grande, only on a bigger scale."

Mary and Dave jumped up and ran to the river. The current was of great swiftness and the water a dirty gray-brown color. There was a sandy beach where we had been sitting, but great rocks stood up here and there, and farther downstream the cliffs came down to the water's edge. It was a wild spot. Mary threw a stick into the water and watched it rapidly disappear.

"My, I'd hate to be caught in that," said Dave, tossing a stone in. "I bet it is swifter than the Rio Grande. I don't see how that Powell bunch ever got down. But I would like to try it in a small aëroplane. I bet it could be done."

Franklin now approached and wanted to know if we were rested and ready for the up trip. "It's about time we started," he remarked.

"Do you come from these parts?" asked the Doctor.

"No, I came from Wyoming. I haven't been here more'n a couple of years. But my wife, she likes it here. It was kinder lonesome out on the cattle lands, she thought. We see more folks here. It pays well, too, I ain't kicking. It's a matter of riding up and

down instead of on the level, that's all. And I kinder like these old mules. They have more sense than a horse."

"But you can't well make friends of them as you can with a horse, can you?" asked Mary. "I know I never could love this old fiend as I did my horse in New Mexico, Jim Snort."

Franklin indulged in a hearty guffaw. "Make friends with a mule? Well, land sakes, no. But when you're choosing your friends you don't just aim to find something with sense, do you? The mule, he always looks out for number one, that's where the sense comes in. But a horse, he's folks. You can love a horse. I had a broncho back in Wyoming. He was a beaut and no mistake. He saved my life for me in a blizzard once. We were out on the plains trying to round up some lost cattle and the storm caught us. I lost my way, hadn't any idea where we were. I just let Pinto have his way and walked beside him. When I got tired he'd wait for me, and once when I rolled over and wanted to sleep, he pushed me and nuzzled me and half pulled me up. He knew I mustn't stay there, for it meant freezing to death. And he finally got me back to the ranch."

"Oh, how could you leave him in Wyoming?" said Mary.

"He was shot by a fool who thought he was hunting big game. Get ap, Tom, we'll never get to the top," and Franklin kicked his mule lustily in the ribs.

I don't know which was worse, going up or com-

ing down. I never dared look back, but at least we knew that every step was bringing us nearer the end and the mules were tired and less inclined to be playful.

"I am sure Trix never could have done it," I said.

"Don't you believe it, Mother. She would have tried to gallop," Mary answered.

"You're right, my dear," observed Mrs. Norton. "Trix is capable of anything. Heigh-ho, I am glad I've done it, but I wouldn't go again for a million."

"I wonder what she has been doing all day," remarked Mary. "That little Indian boy looked awfully jolly."

"I wish I'd stayed up," said Dave.

"Now, Dave, you don't. It was wonderful, and aren't the mules fun?"

"I'd rather go down on an aëroplane. Say, wouldn't that be great?"

"I suppose you'd run it," suggested Mary.

"I bet I could learn how if some one taught me. Anyhow, just think of swooping down."

"I am afraid you wouldn't swoop down more than once, Dave, my boy," interrupted Mrs. Norton. "It would be a pretty daring aviator who would try to land down there."

We stopped before the last steep ascent to rest the mules. Dave slipped off his and sat down on the ground.

"I am thinking that you like the seat of an aëroplane better than the saddle of a mule, is that so?" called Mrs. Norton.

"Here, boy, hold on to that bridle," called Frank-

lin. But alas, his call came too late. Dave's small gray animal departed rapidly up the trail.

"He doesn't seem to need resting!" observed Dave in disgust.

At that moment we heard a yell and a whoop from above.

"Trix," suggested Mr. Norton.

When we turned the next curve in the trail, there were Trix and her small Indian friend calmly sitting on the runaway mule, who was eating his afternoon tea from the side of the trail.

"Hi, that's my donkey," called Dave.

Instantly, amid squeals of delight, the two youngsters dug their heels into the sides of their steed, who started upward. Dave rushed in pursuit and tried to catch the tail of the mule.

"For the love of Pete keep away from his back legs," yelled Franklin, and we all joined in the chorus, "Keep away from his back legs."

Dave jumped back just in time to avoid the heels that struck out. Then the mule, with his double burden, proceeded, the rest followed, and Dave slowly walked behind. He was muttering something about an aëroplane being much better.

There had been a photograph taken of our descent. A man had climbed up an unbelievable precipice and had snapped the party. We found the pictures waiting for us at the top.

"Mother, now you see how you look," said Mary.

"Don't you worry your mother now, Mary," said Mrs. Norton. "She's a good sport. You didn't look so beautiful yourself for all you had bloomers

and a middy blouse. These young folks always think they look fine. Your mother looks as though she wasn't as used to mules as to some other method of locomotion—aëroplanes maybe. Trix, what have you been doing all day?" she ended, as we joined the runaway and his two riders.

"We had a wonderful time—and oh, Mother! Can't we ride back by the cabin and leave Tom? Please, please do."

"Is it far out of the way?" I asked. "I would like to thank your friends, but I am tired."

"No, it's hardly any farther."

So the Doctor, Mary, and I rode with Trix to a little house of logs that made us think of our dearly loved cabin in New Mexico. We heard a low singing as we approached.

"Puva, puva, puva," some one seemed to be saying.

In front of the cabin sat a beautiful Indian girl, dressed in very simple American clothes, apparently lulling to sleep a small baby lying in her lap.

"That's his mother and the baby," said Trix.

The woman arose as we came up, and greeted us.

"Thank you so much for taking care of our little girl," said the Doctor. "You have been most kind."

"It was only a pleasure," was the answer. "She and Tom have had much fun together. Tuvevol, do not forget your bow and arrows," she added to Trix.

"Is that your Indian name, Trix?" I asked. "What does it mean?"

"Butterfly girl," answered Trix. "Where is the bow?"

"That is a pretty name, Tuvevol. We'll have to use it ourselves, when Trix is very good. What was the song you were singing when we came up?"

"That is a lullaby. Would you like to hear it? Your little girl thought it was very nice and funny."

"Oh, please sing it for us," cried Mary.

"I will say first what it means. Puva is sleep—

> " 'Sleep, sleep, sleep,—
> In the trail the beetles
> On each other's backs are sleeping,
> So on mine, my baby, thou—'

"In Hopi land the beetles carry each other on their backs, and we say they are blind and sleeping. So the Hopi mothers carry their babies on the back and sing them to sleep.

> " 'Puva, puva, puva,
> Hohoyawu,
> Shulepö, pave-e
> Na—ikwiokiango,
> Puva, puva, puva.' "

"Won't you sing it again?" asked the Doctor. "It is fascinating."

She sang it once more and then her husband came up.

Again we thanked them both for their kindness.

"Do you leave to-night?" asked the Indian.

"Alas, yes. I wish we could stay longer and drive out to the painted desert. I have always wished to see it."

"Why do they call it that?" asked Trix.

"Because of the beautiful colors, Tuvevol," answered the Indian. "In the morning it is like the

dew when the sun shines through it, and in the evening it is like the rainbow. We are sorry that you are going so soon. There is much that I would like to teach this little one. Also there are many things concerning my people that I would like to talk over with you."

"I certainly wish we could. But our reservations have been made long in advance and we are due in California very shortly. Thank you again."

"Then good-by, Tuvevol," he said, turning to Trix. "Come again to see us."

Trix threw her arms around him and gave him a good hug. Then she proceeded to embrace his wife, but when she turned to find her boy playmate, he had disappeared.

"Tom is afraid to be thought like a woman who kisses," said the Indian, smiling. "I will tell him that you said good-by."

Then Trix picked up her bow and arrows and showed us a lovely piece of pottery that had been given her, and we departed regretfully.

"They are fine people," said the Doctor. "I heard at the hotel that they are both college graduates, and are doing a lot of good among their people."

"I just love them," said Trix. "We had such fun and they had such funny things to eat. I learned how to shoot, but I couldn't shoot as far as Tom."

"I am sorry it is all over, but I am glad to get off this beast," I said as we dismounted in front of the hotel. "Now for a few minutes' rest and then we're on our way again."

"Mother, I wish I'd shown that Indian my ring," said Mary.

"Your father forbade your showing it to any one," I replied.

"But he is so friendly. And he went to college—"

"So was Mateo friendly, the Indian boy in New Mexico to whom you showed the ring. And see what happened. You were captured by Indians and lots of trouble came to lots of people."

"I would like to know more about it, and why Lobo wore it around his neck on that curious red and black cord. I wonder if El Lobo really died?"

"Of course he did. They wouldn't have given us the ring if he hadn't."

"Well, he wasn't dead when they took him off the train," remarked Dave. "I bet we haven't seen the last of him."

CHAPTER IV

A FOREST FIRE NEAR LOS ANGELES

"WE are really on the last lap of our journey west," announced the Doctor, as the train left Williams.

"When will we be in Los Angeles, Daddy?" asked Mary.

"To-morrow, soon after lunch, if the fates are good," answered Mrs. Norton. "Then hurrah for home! And we'll give you a really good California dinner. You will certainly eat with us and go to a show, won't you?"

"Well, I don't know about the show part, but we would love to eat with you."

At that moment Mr. Norton approached waving a newspaper.

"My dear, there may not be any Los Angeles by the time we get there," he called. "There are big forest fires in the San Gabriel Cañon and also north at Tejunga Cañon and beyond near San Fernando."

"Fred, what do you mean?" asked his wife. "You must be fooling. Los Angeles could not be in danger."

"No, not really. But the fires in the mountains are very bad—the worst in years. I am worried about Jack's ranch in the Little Tejunga."

"Who's Jack?" asked Dave. "Oh, Dad, do get us a paper."

"Jack is Mr. Norton's nephew," answered Mrs. Norton. "But, Fred, that's terrible. How about the watershed at Arroyo Seco, and the pleasure parks?"

"The fire marshal thinks they are safe. But people are fleeing to Azuza from the San Gabriel Cañon."

"How soon can we see it? Can we see it from the train?" demanded Dave eagerly.

"What is it, what is it?" clamored Trix, who had not heard the beginning of the conversation. "Will it stop the train? Will it eat us up?"

"It's a big fire in the woods," answered Dave. "A great big fire."

"Where? I want to see it," cried Trix.

"You won't see it till to-morrow, probably," answered her father.

"The paper says the wind is blowing from the northeast, so you may not see it till nearly noon to-morrow," added Mr. Norton. "But the air is full of fine ashes in Pasadena, and even as far as Santa Barbara."

"You won't get a very fine view of Los Angeles, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Norton. "I am so sorry. For the mountains around the city are beautiful."

"Oh, but think of seeing a real forest fire!" Mary put in.

"I doubt if you see anything but a thick cloud of smoke," said Mr. Norton.

"Bless the kids," added Mrs. Norton. "I be-

lieve they are thinking of something between a volcano and a bonfire. Unless you are actually on the firing line, you'd have to be up in an aëroplane to see any flames."

"Oh, Dad, can't we go up in an aëroplane?" asked Dave eagerly.

"Mother, could we?" Mary echoed.

"If that isn't the modern child! Do you want an orchestra seat provided, and do you think you are going to a movie?" said Mrs. Norton.

"Well, I wish it was to-morrow," observed Dave. "I bet we'll see more than you think."

The day seemed a long one. Mrs. Norton and Trixy were the most peaceful in appearance, for Mrs. Norton was finishing a pink knitted baby blanket—"For Jack's youngest," she said—and Trix was absorbed in a fortune-telling box. She busily rolled the little shot to and fro in the box, and when one would come to rest in a hole called out to one of the older members of the party to tell her what it meant. For to Trixy reading was slow and painful. She could spell out—"Not I, said the dog. Not I, said the cat. I will, said the little red hen." But telling her own fortune was too difficult.

"Trixy, I don't believe you know what it all means," said Mary. "I won't read it for you any more. You can't care about it."

"But I do. Mrs. Norton, you do it," demanded Trix. "What does this hole mean? It's number six."

"A fortune awaits you if you are diligent," read Mrs. Norton.

"Yummy Yum," exclaimed Trix joyfully.

Mrs. Norton looked at her gravely. "I don't think you ought to be so happy," she said finally. "That's very bad."

"Oh, dear, what does it mean?" asked Trix.

"I think you are too young to know. Try another, Trix," was the answer. The next hole, number five, told her to beware of a dark man.

"What does 'beware' mean?" Trix said.

"Get out of the way, be careful not to go near, something or some one that will hurt you."

"Does that mean Mr. Norton? He's dark, isn't he?"

"Not dark enough. I think it means an Indian, or maybe the colored porter," answered Mrs. Norton.

"I am not afraid of him," exclaimed Trix. "Why, he gave me some chewing gum before lunch, but don't tell Mother," she added in a whisper.

The next morning, from Barstow on, where the railroad turned toward Los Angeles, Mary, Dave, and Trix fairly glued their faces to the window in the hope of seeing something of the burning forests. Dave declared he could smell smoke as he passed from car to car, after breakfast.

"Maybe you can, but the wind is strong," said Mr. Norton. "They say the trains down from Santa Barbara are full of fine ashes, in spite of the fact that all the windows are closed."

"That's the way we're going up, isn't it, Dad?" asked Dave. "We'll surely smell it then. And maybe see it too."

Later in the morning Mrs. Norton informed us that the mountains which we ought to be seeing were shrouded in the hazy smoke clouds which we could see to the southwest.

"Where's the smoke, where?" demanded Trix. "I don't see any flames or any red."

"We are not near enough," the Doctor told her.

But even when we approached Pasadena and Los Angeles we could see only a smoky haze. At least we had the satisfaction of smelling the fire. The air was laden with it, and with the fine resultant ashes.

"Oh, you will not be able to see any of our beautiful mountains," mourned Mrs. Norton. "We are so proud of them. And now you can see literally nothing."

The Nortons were met at the station by a tall, fair-haired young woman who proved to be a niece, "Jack's wife." And before we parted, we to go to our hotel, and they to their home, we heard that "Jack" had gone up to the cañon to help save his home. His wife had brought their two little children back to Los Angeles.

"Be sure you dine with us to-night, and don't forget the address," said Mr. Norton as we shook hands.

"And if you hire that aëroplane take me too, Dave," added Mrs. Norton.

"I don't like Mrs. Norton,—she's too fresh," growled Dave as we drove off in a taxi. "And say, Dad, we just must see something of that fire."

"I think a forest fire as big as that is a good thing to keep away from," some one replied.

It was very hot in the city. The clerk told us that the thermometer had risen twenty degrees owing to the fire.

We had hardly gotten settled in our rooms and were planning how we would spend the afternoon, when the Doctor was called on the 'phone. Presently he poked his head out of the booth and called to me.

"It's Mr. Norton," he said in a low voice when I joined him. "He says he thinks Dave's right, and that we ought not to miss the sight—that we could get near enough and still be out of danger. He wants to know if three of us will come up in his car. He himself will drive. What do you say?"

What could I say? "Which three?"

"Gracious, we're not going to the Altar of Sacrifice. I should say you, Dave, and Mary."

"Isn't it crazy?" I asked.

"No, of course not. Mr. Norton would not propose it."

"All right, say yes. We can discuss who'll go later."

"A woman might be in the way, and the Doctor might be especially valuable," I thought as I joined the children.

"Mary, run upstairs quick and put on your bloomers. Mr. Norton is going to take you and Dave and Daddy out to see the fire."

There was no need for a second bidding.

"Why can't I go? I want to go, Mother," was Trix's cry.

"You and I are going to stay behind," I answered. "Maybe we can go to see Mrs. Norton."

The Doctor joined us. "Well, what's decided?"

"You and Dave and Mary are to go."

"Nonsense, I want you to go."

"Now, don't be foolish, my dear," I answered. "It's a chance of a lifetime for the children. And if anything happened you would be more useful than I. So it's all decided. But do put on something old —your Grand Cañon clothes. Mary has gone up to change."

Almost before we were ready, Mr. Norton appeared.

"Who's going?" he asked.

"The Doctor, Mary, and Dave," I answered.

"I guessed it. Mrs. Norton said to tell you and Trix to come over and stay with her. She has something planned for you."

I said we accepted with pleasure.

The next minute Mary and Dave had given me frantic hugs and the Doctor had kissed me good-by.

"Don't be worried," was Mr. Norton's parting remark, "I'm a very safe driver and I won't run any risks."

Presently Trix and I issued forth, and after a short walk found Mrs. Norton, her niece, Mrs. Jack, a lively little girl of five, and a baby who "looks like my big doll you wouldn't let me bring," as Trix said.

Mrs. Jack and Trix were both in a state of half

rebellion at not being allowed to join the party who were going up the cañon. Mrs. Norton and I appeared outwardly calm, though I know that we both were sorry to be left behind.

Trix and small Antoinette played together in the garden, while Mrs. Norton and her niece invited me to wander about the streets to see the sights.

"It's a shame you can't see the mountains," observed Mrs. Jack. "We have such lovely ranges. But that's just where the fires are. Our cañon, the Little Tejunga, seems to be in a good deal of danger. Of course I can't help being worried to have my husband up there without me. But he said he would feel freer to work if I were here with the youngsters."

"Children do seem to be dreadfully in the way sometimes," remarked Mrs. Norton. "I know you two mothers are wishing yours were somewhere in the heavenly regions."

"Well, not quite so far as that," I laughed.

"You bad, bad mothers. Here am I with the one member of my family gone to the fire, and I am not complaining, while you are grumbling and yet have your babes here to comfort you."

"Well, why didn't you go?" asked Mrs. Jack, a little crossly.

"Because, my love, having gone through one forest fire I can get along quite well without another. They really are quite terrifying."

"When did you go through one, Auntie?" asked her niece.

"I was on the last train that got through in a big

fire in Canada once. It nearly burned the roof over our heads, and we could hardly move for the poor wood creatures that were trying to escape along the track. It was like being in a stove, and you know my warm Irish heart doesn't need any extra heat. I always preferred Daniel's lion den to the fiery furnace of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And the roar of it! It was frightful. Then I can't bear to see the wonderful trees go. They seem to totter and fall like soldiers in a battle."

"I wonder how this one started. Some one was careless, I suppose."

"People are so wicked in their carelessness," burst out Mrs. Jack. "Think of the glory of our forests, not to mention the pleasant homes and the possible injury to people caused by this fire. And some fool was probably out camping and thought he'd put his fire out. Or maybe he didn't even do that much. It's sickening."

We wandered through the streets of that city of pleasant and hospitable homes. But the hot, smoky haze from the fire seemed to be heavy on us all.

"It must be terrible up in the mountains," shuddered Mrs. Norton. "Let us go home and find the children."

"When do you expect our tourists back again?" I asked.

"Well," replied Mrs. Norton, "if the Doctor is the man I take him for, and something like my husband, they'll come back when the gasoline gives out or their stomachs cry cupboard too loudly. They

won't go where it's too dangerous; that is, where the boys are fighting with the shovel, and maybe the fact that Mary and Dave are along will make them cautious, too. But they will go where there is something doing or I am much mistaken. I hope they will pick up Jack and bring him home."

We found Trix and Antoinette making mud pies, with the usual result of dirty clothes. But such wonderful chocolate-colored cakes as they had made! It made us hungry to look at them.

"Let's have some tea," said Mrs. Jack. "I think we may be having a late dinner."

"My dear, we won't wait for the auto party," answered Mrs. Norton. "But I have no objection to tea now."

"How far is it up to the cañon?" I asked.

"Well, I should say about twenty-five miles. But distances really mean very little to me when I'm in an auto. It may be farther. I fancy they'll 'step on the gas,' as the boys say. It's a pity that Dave didn't get his aëroplane," replied Mrs. Norton.

About half past seven in the evening I decided that Trix and I had better go back to our hotel. Mrs. Norton urged us to stay all night, but I felt that there would be a houseful should Mr. Jack return. Antoinette had already gone upstairs with her mother.

"When shall you begin to worry?" I asked Mrs. Norton, as we said good-by.

"I don't intend to worry. I have a stirring novel, and if I can keep Mrs. Jack from worrying all will go well. It isn't as though this fire were an unex-

pected danger that would leap up at them. They can't miss it, and they don't have to stay with it, as the real fire fighters do."

It was nearly midnight when the 'phone in my room rang. My windows were on the north side, and I could see the dull red in the sky, toward the mountains. I was glad to hear the 'phone, and more than glad when the Doctor's voice came from the other end.

"We're here, and safe, and we'll be right home. I certainly feel like a wretch to have kept you worrying all this time. Forgive us. We'll be right back as soon as we can get a taxi."

"Where's the auto?" I asked.

"In ashes on the mountain, I guess."

And I had to wait twenty minutes before the wanderers returned to explain the fate of the car. They were so hungry that they simply had to be fed before answering questions, although Mary could hardly eat in her eagerness to tell me all about it. Dave was half asleep, and rolled into bed after drinking a glass of milk.

"Well, we certainly saw the fire," laughed Mary. "Mother, it was wonderful and terrible, and I almost wish I hadn't seen it. We brought Mr. Jack back with us. He's so nice, Mother, and such fun. But he ought not to have stayed so long. You see, he couldn't tell from his house how near the fire was coming. But we could. And besides, we were told by one of the rangers. We just had to go after him."

"But how about the car?" I asked. "And how

did you get home? And Mary, you simply *must* go to bed. It's after twelve."

"But I want to tell you. I can't sleep, anyway."

"You've had your fun to-day, Mary," said her father. "Now go to bed, even if you can't sleep."

"We will all go soon," I added. "But I must hear about the car first."

"We did not realize," began the Doctor, "just how bad things were; there was such a heavy pall of smoke over everything. It was getting pretty hot, and I felt that we ought not to go on much farther. I was worried a little about the children, and I knew you would be troubled. The road was in perfectly good condition, but of course we couldn't see far ahead. It was evident that the cañon was in a bad position, though. Mr. Norton was worried about his nephew. Of course he might have left, but we had not met him. Then we met a car coming down, with a couple of men in it, rangers. They advised us to go back. Mr. Norton asked if there were any men up in the camps or cottages above. The rangers answered that they had seen a couple of men up there, one of them they believed was a Mr. Ferris. That was Norton's nephew. We asked if they were coming down or were staying to try to save things. The rangers didn't know. They told us, however, that two of the bridges were down farther on. We held a council of war.

"I regretted the presence of Mary and Dave more than I can say. I felt that Mr. Norton wanted

to push on to find his nephew, but did not think he ought to risk it with the children. There did not seem to be any immediate danger. We were running very slowly. The air was heavy with smoke, and as I said before, we could not see far ahead of us. There was a continuous low roar in our ears, but I could realize that it was not loud enough to mean that the fire was very near.

"At that moment of indecision, we heard shouts and saw a man running toward us down the road. He seemed pretty much excited. As he came nearer, Mr. Norton called out, 'Jack!' I confess I was relieved. Now we need go no farther. Ferris called, 'Where are you going?' as soon as he came near enough to be heard. He was dirty and dishevelled, and looked tuckered out. He told us to get away just as quick as possible.

"We turned around, but even during the few minutes that it took us to turn things seemed to happen. The roaring suddenly increased, the smoke about half a mile below us seemed suddenly to lift, and a long flame shot across the road. I certainly cursed my foolishness in coming there with the children. Mr. Norton looked pretty white. Jack Ferris ran down the road a little way to see if we could make a run for it. There didn't seem to be much fire following the first blaze. We saw him beckon to us. There was so much noise we could not hear well. Fortunately for us, it had been a sort of freak fire that had run across the road, a sort of finger from the main fist that was devastating the land about. We could go on. But—the finger had written on

our path and the bridge was gone. We tried to get the car around, but could not get it up the far side. So we abandoned it, and climbed up ourselves over the still glowing path of the flames. Fortunately we all had heavy boots on.

"When we got back on the road again we started down the hill on a dogtrot. We had not gone more than a mile when we heard shouts again, and were overjoyed to meet the two rangers, who had warned us so short a time before. They had seen the fire leap across the road from below, and had come back fearing for our safety. We all piled into their small car. It was getting dusk by that time, owing partly to the heavy smoke. We could also plainly see the flames in the cañon above us.

"The two rangers expressed their opinion of us pretty forcibly, and I guess they were right. I am sure Norton and I felt like a couple of old fools. But I know he was mighty glad to have picked up his nephew. We got away out of the danger zone, and the farther we got the more dangerous it looked. When we'd gone quite a way down, we came to a crossroad, and then the rangers said they would have to leave us. They were going in a different direction. I think they said up to San Fernando or somewhere.

"There was nothing for it but to pile out and start home on foot. I certainly felt like more kinds of a fool. If only Mary and Dave had stayed at home. The kids were fine. They laughed and sang songs, and Ferris, having swallowed some of his indignant

astonishment at our being there at all, joined in. So we trudged along, packing our troubles in our old kit bag, or 'Marching as to War,' or 'Taking Our Walking Shoes.' Just as it began to be dark in real earnest, we were picked up by a motor truck that had been taking fire fighters and shovels to some other part of the conflict.

"The two men in charge certainly were nice to us. They thought we were homeless refugees, and we made Ferris answer all their questions, because he really had cause to be there. He told them and us, too, how he had done everything to save his cottage, but after doing all he could had taken the most valuable possessions and buried them. He could see from the upper story that a streak of fire was gaining some headway below him, so he left in haste. The truck took us to Pasadena, which, by the way, looks like Herculaneum almost, it is so covered with ashes. In Pasadena we hired a taxi, and came back alive and hungry, as you see, and hoping to be forgiven."

"I must say, I think Mr. Norton ought to be hanged, drawn, and quartered," I said. "The idea of his getting you into such a predicament."

"I suppose at first he thought there was no danger, and when he found there was, he only thought of his nephew. But I know he feels pretty bad about it. I imagine Mrs. Norton will tell him what she thinks of it."

"I hope she does. If she doesn't, I will."

"Is the contrary true?" asked the Doctor.

"Meaning that if she does, I shouldn't? I won't promise."

"But it all ended all right," pleaded the Doctor. "And it was a wonderful experience. Mary and Dave will never forget it. Think how they'll talk about it to the boys and girls at home."

CHAPTER V

LOS ANGELES

THE pall of smoke still hung over the city when we were awakened late the next morning by the telephone. The Nortons were anxious to know how we were and when we planned to leave, and would we not take a drive with them that morning?

"I am afraid your wife will think that you have taken enough drives with me. But Mrs. Norton wishes to take the helm this time," said Mr. Norton's voice over the 'phone.

"Well, if she drives maybe you can persuade the Madame to go, but you will have to make your peace with her," replied the Doctor laughingly.

"What do you say?" he added, turning to me. "Will you take a drive if Mrs. Norton drives?"

"Really, I don't see the joke," I answered.

"Oh, Mother, come on, be a sport. Let's have a drive. We are not going to Santa Barbara till after lunch." This from Mary, who had poked her head in at the door at the sound of our voices.

"All right, providing we go nowhere near the fire," I answered.

So the plan was made to go, and in about an hour the Nortons arrived in a big touring car. Mr. and Mrs. "Jack" and Mr. and Mrs. Norton were in it, but somehow room was found for our five as well.

Trix and I sat in front with Mrs. Norton, and the rest piled in back.

Mrs. Norton began at once to condemn the rashness of the trip of the day before, and presently I found myself more reconciled and more ready to forgive Mr. Norton.

Mary and Dave were evidently so full of excitement and joy at the thought of the danger they had run that I began to feel a little proud.

"Mother, just think of going into a real forest fire and rescuing somebody," cried Mary.

"Meaning me?" laughed Mr. Jack. "You know I think you needed rescuing quite as much as I. But if you want some real thrillers, you should have heard some of the yarns I was told down town this morning."

"Please, please tell us," begged Mary.

"Well, two men up in the Pocoima Cañon worked for two days to save some houses. They started back fires—"

"What are back fires?" asked Mary.

"I know," broke in Dave.

"Tell us, then," said his father.

"Why they dig up the ground and make a trench where nothing could burn."

"Who is 'they,' and why could nothing burn?"

"The fire fighters, of course. Nothing could burn because earth won't burn and they leave no grass or bushes or trees in the cleared place. They make it long and in the direct path of the forest fire. Then they start another fire, the back fire, in front of the trench. The flames haven't anything to burn in

back, so they go forward and meet the real fire. When they meet they go out. The men have to watch the side, though, and be ready with their shovels to whack out any spreading flames."

"That's a good description, Dave," said Mr. Jack. "Now, then, as you can imagine, it was quite hard work for these two men to dig and dig steadily for several days. One of the men put a lot of valuable things in his fireplace, and packed them in with fifty bags of cement. The fire was burning just above them, and they could hear the roar of the flames. Suddenly, a great rock was dislodged by the burning of its bed of bushes, and came tumbling down, bringing some hot embers with it. Instantly the woods started burning below the house, and it took several hours of hard work to get it out.

"In another place fifty fire fighters were almost trapped. They had been working hard with their shovels to keep back the fire in front and at the side, when suddenly one man, stopping to rest, turned around and saw that the fire had crept in below them and they were entirely surrounded by flames.

"They worked like mad to keep their island of safety; some of them were scorched by the heat and one fellow had his shoes burned off his feet. The heat was terrible. But somehow they managed to beat back their enemy until the fire died down on one side enough to enable them to escape to a safer place."

"I don't think I'd like to be a fire warden," said Mary. "We were quite near enough yesterday."

We drove over to Pasadena, "just to show Mother the ashes," as Dave explained. The smoke, too, was heavier here, and a long red tongue of flame could be seen occasionally leaping across some ditch or small cañon up in the mountains.

"We can't see Mt. Lowe," said Mr. Norton. "It is so high that the snow comes early on it and stays till late in the spring. So while the folks here in Pasadena are celebrating their wonderful rose festival on the first of January, an hour or so away other people are skiing and snowshoeing and coasting."

"I hate to think of all those beautiful trees up on the hills," said Mrs. Norton. "Let's go back. It is too much like a battlefield full of wounded and dying. We'll take in the Los Angeles mission, and then have an early lunch. The mission is not nearly as beautiful as the one at Santa Barbara which you are soon to see, but it is interesting historically."

"What's a mission?" asked Trix.

"Mary, what is a mission?" said the Doctor.

"Well, I thought a mission was a number of Christian people going to the heathen as missionaries."

"Trix, do you understand?"

"No, what are heathen?"

"I think we'll just talk about missions now and forget about the heathen. The missions of California were houses like churches, Trix, built something like the New Mexican adobe churches. They were built a long time ago by Spanish priests who wanted to teach the Indians how to be Christians and tell them about the Lord Jesus. They gathered

all the Indians of the neighborhood together and had schools for the children, and taught the men and women all sorts of useful things. But first of all they taught them to pray. When the mission bells rang every Indian stopped his working and said his prayers."

"Oh, Daddy, that's like the Angelus picture," cried Mary. "The Angelus called the French peasants to pray."

We found the quaint old Los Angeles mission building with its bell towers.

"It is not as perfect as some of the others, but it is one of the oldest," said Mr. Norton. "Our beautiful mission buildings were all going to rack and ruin when Helen Hunt Jackson got interested in Indians and historical things generally, and wrote 'Ramona.' A number of public-spirited people then formed a club to preserve our old landmarks."

Presently we returned to the Nortons' house, and while we were waiting for lunch we wandered through the big gardens, with their orange and prune trees. There were still some ripe plum-prunes hanging from the lower branches, large and luscious. Mary said she liked them much better this way, but Dave and Trix agreed that they preferred them dried, the way they came at home.

"You can see them being dried all over this part of California and nearly as far as San Francisco," said Mrs. Norton, "if it's drying you want,—great fields of them, with their owners praying on every side that the Lord will hold back the rains till the drying is over.

"But come, here is Wu to tell us lunch is ready."

Sure enough, in the door stood a pleasant-faced, quiet old Chinaman, without his Chinese costume, in spotless white, only wearing the noiseless Chinese slippers.

Presently, as we sat at lunch, Mary whispered to me, "Mother, he has a cord round his neck just like the one my ring is on."

"Nonsense, Mary," I answered softly.

"But it's true," she insisted. "I just caught a glimpse of it. Now look, when he bends over to scrape the crumbs from the table."

Then I did notice at the back of the man's neck just a glimpse of a narrow cord, black and red, like the one El Lobo had worn.

"I wish Mr. Norton would ask him what it is. Maybe he knows."

When the servant went out to get the dessert, Mary whispered to Mr. Norton, "Do you know what the cord is the Chinese man who waits on the table wears around his neck?"

"What color is it?" said Mr. Norton.

"Black and red, very curiously woven."

"I don't know. They have quantities of secret societies. But they really keep them secret. One thing is sure, though. Anything a Chinaman wears means something. How about it, Jack? You know more about such things than I do."

"Why, I think there is some ancestral, back to China, society, several thousand years old, that has a red and black insignia. I believe they have a queer sort of animal for a mascot or totem symbol. It is

anti-foreign and anti-Jap. Its chief strength lies in China. Naturally, the men over here don't care so much. They have a legend about a winged animal and a maiden—"

At that moment the silent Wu entered, bringing in a wonderful pastry filled with whipped cream.

"I hear they have gathered a harvest of rattlesnakes up in the mountains," said Mr. Norton, turning the conversation. "The oil contained in their bodies is quite valuable. In one place more than a hundred were discovered, their skins uninjured by the fire. Some say the smoke smothered them. Others again say they bite themselves to death to keep from being burned."

"Huh," said Dave. "I don't believe they bit themselves. How could they? Don't they always strike, after rearing up?"

"Well, I am not sure that they would, even if they could," remarked Jack Ferris.

"What do you think, Wu, do the rattlers kill themselves when they are threatened?"

The servant shook his head. "Snakes very wise," was his only remark. "Rattlesnake he not so wise. He talk too much. Wise fellow strike and kill without telling."

With these words Wu disappeared kitchenward.

"Well," said Mr. Norton, "it looks as though friend Wu heard what we were saying about Chinese secret societies. How did you happen to ask about the cord, Mary?" he added.

"That's too long a story to tell now," interrupted the Doctor, "especially after Wu's gentle hint."

As we returned to the hotel, "Mary," said her father, "where do you keep the ring?"

"In a little box in my bag. I sort of hate to wear it after El Lobo—I mean the cord and all. He was so dirty."

"I think I'll take charge of it," said the Doctor. "I can keep the little box in an inside pocket. But I believe I'll send it back East or put it in a bank for safe-keeping in San Francisco."

"Oh, Dad, put it in the bank. Don't send it by mail again."

"All right, the bank be it. But for goodness' sake don't ask any more questions about cords and things."

Early that afternoon we started for Santa Barbara. The windows and doors of the train were kept shut, but in spite of that, the fine ashes from the forest fire sifted in and the air was hot and thick.

"I have always wanted to see Santa Barbara," I said. "I think of it as the land of flowers."

"Well, you may not see as many of them as you hoped for at this time of the year. It is apt to be dry, and the flowers absent. But this has been such an unusual summer with so much rain that we may get some flowers. At least we can see the lovely trees and houses. I have planned to stay at a quaint hotel outside of Santa Barbara right near the beach. You wanted to see Santa Barbara because of the flowers. Well, ever since I was a youngster I've wanted to see the Cave of the Devils, or whatever it is called, out on Santa Cruz Island off the coast here. I've read of it and heard of it and seen pic-

tures of it and imagined it. And by Jingo, to-morrow I am going to get a launch and go over and see it."

"Won't you take us, Dad?" asked Dave.

"I won't consider going without you!" laughed the Doctor. "Hurrah for the bounding main to-morrow! And then the day after we go on to Frisco."

We had passed the smoke of the Los Angeles fires by this time, and were passing through rolling country with brown hills, and the high blue mountains of the Sierras to the far east. To the west lay the great Pacific Ocean, and as we approached Santa Barbara we could catch glimpses of it below us, rolling in on the sandy beaches, with a white edge of surf.

We got out at a little station just south of Santa Barbara, and went over to the comfortable and picturesque hotel, spread out in one-story bungalows. Great palms reared their heads among the high trees, giving the grounds a strange appearance.

The rooms assigned to us were farthest away from the dining room in the main building. The sound of the surf on the shore could be heard quite plainly, although it was too far to see. Each room had a door that opened on to the grounds.

"It would be very safe in case of fire," suggested Mary.

"But how about burglars?" asked Dave.

"There are none," I answered quickly.

It had been a hard day, so after we had eaten a delicious supper, Dave and Trix retired. Indeed,

Mary, the Doctor, and I soon followed them. The Doctor and I had the farthest room, then came Dave in a small room, and lastly Mary and Trix.

"Be sure you lock your door, Mary," were our last good-night words.

"She has," called Trix from beneath the covers.

It must have been after midnight when I was awakened by hearing conversation in the children's rooms. The Doctor arose and went in to see what the trouble was. It seemed that Trix had awakened and thought she saw some one moving in the room. She called to know if it was Mary, but Mary had evidently been asleep. The Doctor laughed at her, but Trix stuck to her tale. Her father examined the room and found nothing gone.

"But why did you not lock your door?" he asked. "We told you to."

"I did," said Mary.

"She did," echoed Trix.

"Well, it's unlocked now. You must be mistaken, and only thought you locked it. At any rate, I have bolted it now and we will leave the doors in between the rooms open. So try to go to sleep."

I am afraid it was some time before the children followed this good advice. We could hear Trix exclaiming from time to time that she was sure she saw something. But finally every one quieted down.

"It was strange about that door, though," said the Doctor.

CHAPTER VI

SMUGGLERS ON THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

THE next morning Trix was questioned as to the intruder of the night before. But sleep seemed to have removed all but the vaguest recollections. She was sure there had been some one moving in the room, that was all. The Doctor reported it to the hotel clerk after breakfast and then proceeded to find out how we could best hire a launch to go out to the island of Santa Cruz. It was decided to go in to Santa Barbara first, see the mission, and drive about the town and take a boat from there.

It was a perfect day, with a calm blue sea stretching forever toward the west. Santa Barbara appeared like a foreign town with its bright sunlit streets, its palms and gardens, its charming low-built houses. The mission was just as we had always pictured it. The two towers with their bells, the smooth walls, the gardens and grounds, all seemed to speak of California's early days, the days of the worthy fathers who braved untold dangers to do their duty as they saw it. Only the church was open to the ladies of the party, and we did not see the mysterious "forbidden gardens." I would have liked to linger and talk to the old Franciscan who piloted us about and showed us relics in the church. But some of the party were impatient, and before I

knew it, almost, we were embarked in a little launch and speeding out over the Pacific.

The town of Santa Barbara smiled out on us from its background of brown hills and wished us a pleasant journey, I've no doubt.

"Who was Father Serra?" asked Mary. "That priest in there at the mission spoke of him several times."

"He was one of the pioneer missionaries of the Franciscan order," I answered. "He lived in the early part of the eighteenth century, and gave up a brilliant career in Spain and Mexico to tramp thousands of miles on foot to preach to the Indians. There is a story that once when water was scarce and every one else was complaining, some one asked the worthy padre if he did not suffer from thirst. He replied that he had found a secret, which was to eat little and talk less, so as not to waste the saliva.

"He always traveled on foot, as that was the rule of his order. And besides, he could get into more friendly relations with the Indians that way. Of course he could not carry supplies, and had to depend largely on the generosity of the savages as he called them."

"It seems queer that the whites and Indians didn't stay good friends," said Mary. "They began right."

"The trouble came when the whites decided that the earth belonged to them, and that their red brothers had no rights at all except to a place in heaven," replied her father. "Of course there were some cruel savages, our old friends the Apaches and others. But when one thinks of what our race has

done to the Indians the wrongs seem mostly on the other side. And the worst of it is that the cruelty of the whites came from their desire for gold and for wealth. There was absolutely no excuse for it."

"Daddy, what's that?" interrupted Trix.

"What's what?"

"Over there, like a big mountain."

"That's the nearest of the island group, Anacapa," said the man who was running the launch, Captain Danforth. "It is really three islands, but from here it looks like one."

"How much farther is Santa Cruz?" asked the Doctor.

"Oh, quite a bit from here. Anacapa is about halfway."

"What are you going to see on the island?" asked Dave.

"Are we going to have a picnic?" demanded Trix.

"We are going to have a picnic and we are going into a big, big cave, much bigger than the one in New Mexico. And we are going to see sea lions and hear the strangest, most awful noises you ever heard!" answered her father.

"What are sea lions?" asked Dave. "Just what do they look like?"

"I know," said Mary. "I saw some trained ones last year. They played ball with their noses. They are such funny-looking creatures, with black shiny bodies and tails and big mouths and queer flapper arms. And my, they make the biggest noise. And, oh, they spit!"

"You used to give a lively representation of one, didn't you, in your youth?" I said to the Doctor.

"Now don't recall my early sins!" he replied.

"Daddy, do it!" begged Mary.

And "Daddy, do it," clamored Trix and Dave.

"I am afraid I would upset the boat," answered their father. "You wait till you've seen the real ones. Then maybe I'll do it for you."

We passed the wild rocky shores of the Anacapa Islands, where the surf broke on the cliffs in white foam even on such a calm day as this.

"It looks a little like the Maine coast," said the Doctor.

"I bet it would be fun to climb on," remarked Dave. "Aren't there lots of caves and things?" he asked Captain Danforth.

"The island we are heading for has the caves," was the reply.

"They say Drake came here in the old days when he sailed the Spanish Main," added the Doctor. "And pirates and buccaneers used to hide their booty on Santa Cruz."

"Aren't you thinking of the islands in the West Indies?" I asked.

"There were pirates and smugglers here too, Ma'am," said our skipper. "And they do say that many a Chinaman has come in, not so long ago, by way of these islands."

"Oh, Dad, what fun! Why shouldn't he come in?" asked Dave.

"Under the Chinese Exclusion Act only certain

classes of Chinese were allowed to enter. Both Chinese and Japanese laborers have made themselves unpopular here."

"Why, Daddy?" Mary demanded.

"Why is it, Captain Danforth? You're a native, tell the children."

"Me a native? I came from Cape Cod thirty years ago. I'm no native. But they are right about the Japs and the Chinese. They live on rice and work twenty hours a day. And how can a union man and a white man keep up with them? Why can't they stay at home?"

"You didn't," remarked Dave.

Captain Danforth from Cape Cod puffed on his pipe for a moment. "But I don't live on rice," he remarked presently. "Nor I don't work twenty hours a day."

"I bet you don't," laughed Dave.

"Dave, you are not being polite," I said.

And, "You're too fresh," said Mary.

"Don't you worry, the boy made a catch that time, Ma'am," observed our skipper. "But I'll get even with him yet. So look out for squalls, young man," he added, turning to Dave.

"Do you know anything about Chinese secret societies, Captain Danforth?" asked Mary.

"Me? Why should I know anything about 'em? As long as they wash my shirts for me, I don't care what they belong to. Let them have their unions. No, I don't know anything about them. Except as I was saying before, I've been told some get in by way of these islands that don't belong here."

"I suppose you never brought a boatload over, did you?" asked the Doctor.

"Me—what would I want with a boatload of Chinamen?—or whiskey either," he added with a grin.

"Oh, Mother," whispered Mary, "do you suppose he smuggles in drinks and things?"

"Mother, I'm thirsty," broke in Trix, who had caught the words but not their meaning. "Where is something to drink?"

"Oh, Trix, can't you wait till we have lunch on the island?" said Mary.

The Doctor took out the thermos bottle and proceeded to serve out the water. Then came a cry for food.

"I am hungry, Mother," said Dave.

"So am I," echoed Trix.

A box of crackers was opened. "No more now till lunch," was the order.

"Not even one sandwich?" begged Dave.

"Not a crumb. Look, Trix, we are approaching our island."

"That north end where you see that high mountain is Point Diablo," remarked Captain Danforth. "It's under that end that the Painted Cave is located. Shall we go straight there, Sir?"

"Let's eat lunch first," was the chorus.

"All right, Skipper," said the Doctor. "Land us in a good place to cook our bacon and we'll take in the cave afterward. Hullo, isn't that a boat out there before us?"

" 'Pears to be, a fishing launch I reckon. Or maybe

after sea lions. They catch them here occasionally for museums."

A large launch was anchored off the east coast of the island and several small boats seemed to be plying between it and the shore.

"Are they fishermen?" asked Dave.

"Do you see those big wooden cages floating in the water?" asked Captain Danforth, replying in true Cape Cod fashion with another question. "They keep the sea lions in them until they get enough to bring their catch ashore. I thought they were lion catchers," he added.

"Maybe we can see them catch one of the sea lions," cried Dave. "How do they do it?"

"Well, a lot of cow punchers get together and drive the creatures back into some cave where they can't get away. When the sea lion is cornered he will fight, you bet. As soon as they start to attack, they are roped, just like steers, by the lariat throwers. Then they are dragged out and put in the cages till enough good ones are caught, when all hands are piped aboard and the captured sea lions are taken back to the mainland. It's pretty dangerous work and sometimes the catchers have to beat a quick retreat. Often the sea lions will bite or tear the rope and get away. They're a queer lot. Always screeching and fighting among themselves. They sound like crazy creatures."

Our boat had by this time got within hailing distance of the large launch.

"That skipper there is a friend of mine," observed Danforth. "I thought they were hunting sea lions.

He doesn't appear to have caught any yet, though. Yes, there's one in that cage. Look there, boy." And Dave looked, as did all the rest of us.

Sure enough, in one of the floating cages was a screaming black thing, shining and slippery, and churning the water with its tail.

"Poor thing, why don't they let it go?" said Mary, while Trix clung to her father and whispered, "I am scared."

"Had any luck?" called Danforth to a rough-looking man on the other boat.

"Just one. We're waiting till later, or maybe early to-morrow morning to get a real catch."

"Good luck to you," called Danforth. "I am here on a picnic. We go back soon."

Then we proceeded on our way and anchored in a large cave, part of which was on land and part over the water. Captain Danforth then took us ashore in the rowboat that had trailed astern of us.

While the bacon was cooking over a fire that the Doctor made, Mary, Dave, and Trix wandered back on a trail that led up from the cave into a cañon. They were gone some time, and lunch was ready and I beginning to get troubled before they returned. Finally we heard cries of joyous excitement, and they rushed down into the cave, Dave first, with Mary helping Trix in the rear.

"Oh, Dad, we found a wonderful cave," cried Mary. "We followed the trail till it started up a very high place and we decided not to take it. So we struck off on a sort of ledge, and by and by we found a split in the rocks. We looked through this

and found there was a big cave below us. It was pretty dark, so that we could only faintly see things. But there must have been some water and some land from the sound of it. And, oh, Dad, we do want to explore it from the water side. It looked awfully big and spooky."

"Maybe it was the Painted Cave," suggested the Doctor.

"Which direction is that in?" asked Dave.

"There has never been an opening found to that," observed Captain Danforth.

"Let's have our lunch first, anyway," I said.

"We tied a handkerchief to a rock on top so we'd know it from the water," said Dave.

"You'll never see that from the water below," laughed Danforth. "Why, those rocks some of them are fifteen hundred feet from the water."

When the last crumb was eaten, Mary and Dave wanted to take the rowboat and explore. But the Doctor insisted that the Painted Cave should be seen first.

"Can we all go in the boat at one time?" he asked the Captain.

"Sure, the children don't take up much room," was the reply.

So we rowed north along the coast till we came to a great arched rock, the entrance to the cave. The place was huge, and the walls apparently painted by some giant hand in yellows, reds and browns, and other colors.

"Mother, who did it?" cried Dave. "Isn't that beautiful?"

"The salt in the water did it," said the Doctor. "I don't know just why it does it here and nowhere else in these coast caves of Santa Cruz. It certainly is wonderful. But I had always heard there were strange noises too."

"Wait till you get into the back cave," said Captain Danforth. "You are sure the kids won't be scared?" he added.

"What would scare them?" asked the Doctor.

"Well, the noises and the dark and the sea lions in there. Of course there's nothing that would really hurt them. But it's sort of jumpy."

"What do you say, Trix, will you be scared?"

"I want to go," answered Trix emphatically.

At the back of the cave was a black hole at the edge of the water that seemed to be about the size of the boat we were in. When a large wave rolled into the cave, the hole would be completely hidden. But during the few moments between the bigger waves the Captain pushed our boat quickly through the hole and in a moment we were in absolute darkness except for the spot of light that marked our place of entrance. We were greeted, too, by terrifying moans and shrieks and wails.

Trix clung to me, and I felt that she should not have come. But in a moment Captain Danforth held aloft a great flaming torch, while the Doctor called "Good morning," in a loud voice, that echoed and reëchoed about us.

"No one knows how deep it is here," remarked Danforth. "It's about one hundred feet high."

"What are the noises?" asked Dave in rather a small voice.

"It's the water echoing in the caves," replied his father. "There are lots of small caves and entrances that we cannot see, but through which the waves hiss and roar. It certainly is a queer place. Look at those sea lions."

For our torch had startled some of these great beasts, who floundered about in the water and spread fiery sparkles of phosphorescence as they swam about.

"Let's go back," said Mary. "It's awfully spooky."

"What if the waves filled the entrance forever and we couldn't get out?" asked Dave, as a great mass of water covered up the light which marked the place where we had come in.

"It couldn't, on a calm day like this," said Danforth. "But if you are ready to go, this is a good chance."

"Let's go now," cried Trix.

So our skipper pushed out after the retreating wave, and we were out in the sunlight and beauty of the outer cave again.

"I didn't like it in there," said Trix, who looked rather pale.

"Now can we find our cave?" asked Mary.

"What do you want to do?" said her father.

"Why, won't you come with Dave and me till we find the place we saw this morning? We can go in the rowboat while Mother and Trix fix up the lunch things and wait for us. We won't be long."

"All right, but we must hurry. When do we have to start back, Skipper?"

"We ought to start about three-thirty," was the answer.

"Well, it's not quite three now, so let's go at once."

Captain Danforth landed with Trix and me, and the three others went off in the boat, much to Trix's disgust, although she seemed to have had enough of caves for the present.

Danforth seemed to be uneasy, and the later it got the more he fidgeted about and wondered where the others were.

"Surely nothing can have happened to them," I said.

"You never can tell," he answered gloomily, and Trix kept saying "I wish they would come," or "Why doesn't Dave come and play with me?"

It was nearly four when we heard a call and the sound of oars.

"Here they come," cried Trix.

Sure enough, the boat appeared at the entrance.

"Oh, Mother," cried Dave, "we found the cave and we found a wounded man too!"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"He'd fainted and Dad fixed him up. He was in the cave," said Dave.

"And he had a cord around his neck like mine, red and black," cried Mary.

"Hush, children, don't talk too much," said the Doctor sharply.

The next moment he brought the boat ashore. In

the bottom lay the motionless form of a man, in a sort of uniform, hatless. The face was white and rather clean cut.

Danforth examined him with us. Round the neck was a red and black cord.

"Where is he hurt?" I asked, while Trix said, "Is he killed, Dad?"

"He seems to have a fractured skull," answered the Doctor, "and to be in rather bad shape. I must get him back as soon as possible to Santa Barbara, so we had best start right off, Skipper."

"Who do you think it is?" asked Mary.

"I imagine it's a revenue officer of some sort," said the Doctor, watching Captain Danforth keenly as he spoke.

The Captain was busy helping, and if he felt any surprise, did not show it. He helped the Doctor get the wounded man aboard the launch, and then came back for us, leaving the Doctor to work over his patient. In a very short time the anchor was up and we had started. The launch belonging to the fishermen was nowhere to be seen.

"I would like to have asked them about this fellow," observed Danforth. "I think I ought to. They'll be wanting to know all about it at Santa Barbara, I reckon."

"I think we can make our own report," said the Doctor, rather sharply.

We sped along, but the Captain seemed uneasy. He poked around the machinery and finally examined the gasoline tank.

"I am afraid we had better put back," he said.

"I'm almost out of gasoline. There must be a leak. Those fellows on the other boat will lend me some."

The Doctor stood up. "Listen to me, my man," he said in a cool tone. "You have plenty of gas, and you don't need to go back. In fact, you will get us to Santa Barbara in record time or I'll know the reason why. I can run a boat myself, if necessary, and I have a little argument in my pocket here which I don't want to use except in the last resort."

The Captain scowled, but made no reply. Again we sped on.

Suddenly the wounded man lifted up his head, and muttered, "Did you get him? The Chinaman?" Then he half opened his eyes. "Where am I?" he asked.

"You are in the hands of a doctor, who orders you to keep still," was the answer.

The eyes closed and the man sank back.

So we rushed through the blue water, Mary, Dave, Trix, and I in the bow of the boat, and Captain Danforth in the stern. The Doctor sat in the center, with one eye on the wounded man and the other on the skipper, while he held under his coat the pistol I remembered now to have urged his buying before we left Boston.

It was a swift trip, but it seemed like hours. Captain Danforth apparently had no thought but to bring us safely to shore. The wounded man did not stir. But Trix was full of questions and wanted to know again and again about the finding of the revenue officer.

"We had rowed for some little time along the rocky coast, broken up by cañons and caves," began her father. "Finally we came to a place that Mary said might be the one they had looked down at. We rowed part way in and then found rocks, as usual. The cave seemed unusually narrow and long, but we could see a shaft of light in the back, possibly the opening found by Dave and Mary. Dave wanted to get out, so he took off his shoes and stockings and crawled along on the rocks till he got to shore. Presently he called out that he had found something, and would I bring a light. I managed to get in nearer and followed him with my flash light.

"Way back in the cave, which opened out into a large space, was this revenue officer, lying near the blackened sticks of an old camp fire. There were some bottles and things about. I gave the man a rapid examination, found he had no bullet wounds on him, and guessed the thing had been done by a blow from the back, as his head was badly hurt. He was alive though, breathing heavily. Around his neck was the cord, and when I loosened it he breathed more easily. We had a hard time getting him to the boat, but we did, and here we are taking him to Santa Barbara as quickly as possible.

"Now, Trix, don't ask any more questions."

"Will you have to stay on and give your testimony to the police?" I asked.

"I hope that can be done to-night," was the brief reply. "I want to mix in as little as possible."

"But the men who did this ought to be punished," said Mary indignantly.

"I am sure I hope they will be."

Our arrival at Santa Barbara created great excitement. The Doctor bade us take a taxi out to the hotel, where he would join us as soon as possible.

"I shall take Dave, because he found the man," he added.

He had paid off Captain Danforth, without a word on either side. As we got into our taxi we saw the skipper put to sea again, with a wave of his hand.

"He seems to have plenty of gasoline," said Mary, as we drove off.

It was almost dark by the time we reached the hotel, lying among the tall trees, its friendly lights shining to welcome us. We were all hungry and ate a substantial supper, and then retired to our rooms. Trix was so tired that she went to bed, where she lay contentedly, while Mary read "Raggedy Ann" aloud to her. The day had been an exciting one indeed for such a child. Even I found "Raggedy Ann" soothing and a pleasant change.

Finally Mary, protesting and indignant, also retired, after several games of double canfield. At about ten we heard the voices of Dave and the Doctor. We sat down in my room, Mary joining us in her wrapper, to hear the story of the night's adventure.

"But first of all have you had supper?" Mary asked.

"Yes, indeed, in one of the swellest hotels in Santa Barbara. Oh, Yum! They had wonderful things," cried Dave.

"Now tell us what happened," I said.

"Well, a policeman got an ambulance for us. He recognized the man as a revenue officer who had been working along the coast trying to get some bootleggers and smugglers of Chinese. It seems they come in through Mexico, and are brought up by fishing boats to these islands."

"Oh, Dad, the sea-lion boat!" cried Mary.

"Exactly so! And I shrewdly suspect our friend Captain Danforth knows more about it than he was telling. At any rate, we took the man to a hospital, for if I am right, it will be quite a while before the poor fellow tells any story himself, if he ever does. That was a nasty crack on the head. Then we went to the police station, where I told my story, aided by Dave. It was all taken down in good order, including my suggestion that those fellows we had seen that day might need watching. I told them of Captain Danforth's rapid departure also, and they said they had had their eye on him for a long time.

"Then they put us up at a hotel for supper, and here we are. We can go to-morrow, provided I return, if necessary, later. Now, Mary and Dave, go right to bed and lock and bolt your doors lest the Bogyman get you."

After some little discussion the children retired, but I fear they stayed awake for a while.

"This is a great life for children to lead," I said. "Can't we ever settle down to a peaceful existence like other people?"

"I really am getting superstitious," answered the Doctor. "I believe that until we lose Mary's ring, we will live in an atmosphere of adventure. I asked

the police officer about the red and black cord, and he told me a bit more about it. It is the insignia of a secret society, down on foreigners and just now especially anti-Japanese. It is very old, and has its greatest strength in China itself. But naturally some of its spies and scouts have to go about in other countries. They come in via Mexico and, apparently, the Channel Islands. Just now smugglers are bringing in whiskey and spirits from Mexico, so that the two help each other.

"This revenue officer, Brown, has been on the track of the Chinese business for some time. He had been hanging around the island of Santa Cruz until he came to grief; how, he will have to tell us himself. It is the custom of this Chinese society to decorate its victims with the red and black cord, which is also worn by the members who are chosen to kill certain enemies.

"I asked the Chief whether he knew of any ring being mixed up in it. He told me that he had heard vague rumors from one of their Chinese revenue officers. The totem, or symbol of the society, is a curious winged beast, something like the one, .I imagine, on Mary's ring. The story is that during some foreign invasion of China, the royal princess was borne away from danger by a winged creature, I suppose a sort of dragon, and carried to a high mountain. Whereupon a flood descended and wiped out a lot of the invaders. The land was repeopled by the sons of the dragon and the princess.

"The head of this secret society therefore wears a ring to symbolize the marriage of the dragon and

the princess, and the red and black cord indicates death to foreigners. It seems that long, long ago, when another invasion took place, some of the fleeing Chinese passed over a western sea and brought the ring to a far country, where it disappeared. So another ring was made, and carefully preserved and handed down from leader to leader. But it is death for any but the leader to wear the ring.

"Now, my dear, my vote is that Mary's ring be consigned to perdition. There may be nothing but nonsense in this long yarn, and we are in modern America and not ancient China. Nevertheless, it should go, I think."

"Let us put it in the bank in Frisco," I answered. "If there is any truth at all in the story, the ring must be immensely old and valuable to antiquarians. But I agree with you that the sooner it is out of our hands, the better. Do you suppose some one really came into the children's room last night?"

"I don't know, my dear. But I shall leave our connecting doors open and run no chances. I have an idea that Danforth owes me a grudge for this day's work. I will be glad to get away from here in the morning."

CHAPTER VII

OVER THE TRAIL OF THE PADRES TO MILLS COLLEGE

THAT night the Doctor made several trips from one sleeping room to another to be sure that all was well. The moon cast soft, mysterious shadows through the windows and the great trees whispered strangely in the breeze outside. The Doctor was gone longer than usual the third time, and when he finally returned said that he thought he had heard a noise at one of the windows. He had waited and watched, but nothing more could be seen or heard. Finally, as the first light of early dawn began to cheer us, we fell into a deep sleep, and would have missed breakfast and train both had not Trix awakened us.

Dressing and packing were hurriedly attended to, and presently we were saying good-by to Santa Barbara.

"I wish we could have driven up among those beautiful Santa Inez hills," said the Doctor, as we made ourselves comfortable in the train. "I love the brown slopes with the oaks clinging to them. I almost wish we had taken time to motor up 'the King's Road,' which follows the trails of the padres of old. It winds in and out by the sea, among the hills, and touches the various missions. It would not take

long, now in these fast cars, though it took the padres a day's journey from one mission to another."

"Well, one cannot do everything. I certainly am not sorry to get away from the neighborhood of Captain Danforth and that spooky hotel."

"Daddy," asked Mary, "where is Death Valley? Did we pass it on our way here?"

"No, it was to the north of the Santa Fé route. They tell me it is a horrible, desolate place."

"Why is it called 'Death Valley'?" asked Dave.

"That's a fairly long story," answered his father. "It belongs to the early days of California. Not, of course, to the time of the Spanish missions. But to the days of the pioneers.

"You have seen the old prairie schooners. Picture to yourselves a party setting out with their ox teams attached to the great unwieldy wagons. Some of the men probably rode, the others walked. The women and children drove in the wagons or walked.

"The particular pioneers who gave Death Valley its name were themselves nameless. But they started out from some Utah settlement, perhaps from farther east, to go to California, then the true Promised Land. They got into the valley and lost all traces of those who had gone before. Nothing but sand lay before them, and the hazy blue mountains beyond. It was in August, and even hardened scouts hate to try that valley in summer.

"They had no extra supply of water, for they did not know how terrible was this particular desert. They tell me that men can only survive in this place

by drinking gallons of water during the heat of the day, when the sand fairly burns like coals under your feet. These poor people traveled over part of the valley, and then perished miserably of thirst. Their bones were found strewed about the wrecks of the wagons, with the carcasses of their faithful animals beside them. Not one survived, I believe, and who they were no one knows. But Death Valley is the name of that terrible place ever since."

"Why did people want so much to go to California? I mean, what made them brave all those dangers?" asked Mary.

"Different reasons. And of course you must remember that they did not always know what lay ahead of them. They came, too, from hard frontier life and were used to dangers and rough work.

"At first came the homesteaders, the people who were looking for lands to cultivate. They had heard of the beautiful fertile country in the west, where cultivation was easy and things grew almost of themselves. The next people were the gold seekers of '49. You don't need to be told why they came. But I think I have told enough for the present. I want to look out at these brown hills we are climbing and say good-by to this part of the Pacific. We shan't see it again till we go out on the west side of San Francisco, which may be some time ahead."

But Trix did not feel interested in any more scenery, and she begged for a game. So while the Doctor and I looked out of the window, Dave and Trix were soon quarreling over "Parchisi" and Mary

deeply engrossed in "Ramona," that appealing story of Indian life.

"I wonder if they ever will catch those fellows who half killed the revenue officer," said the Doctor in a low voice. "Unless they reach Santa Cruz before Captain Danforth, I don't believe they will find anything this trip. I am convinced that our Cape Cod skipper knew considerable about what was going on in the islands. I certainly hope I shan't have to go back and testify. It surely will be good to settle down to work at Oakland and not have sightseeing and hairbreadth escapes the order of the day."

"We may find it a bit hard to keep house in a strange place for such a short time," I said.

"Yes, but we are lucky to have a house at all, they tell me. Fortunately one of the faculty is on a vacation and has consented to our using his place. How will you like Chinese help? For I suppose there will be no other available."

"Oh, Daddy, will we really have a Chinaman to be our cook?" asked Trix, who always called any household help a "cook."

"Yes, my dear, and he will probably be like Chan Wang. Do you remember?

> " 'He stole his mother's pickled mice,
> And threw the cat in the boiling rice,
> And when they'd eaten her, said he,
> "Me wonders where that mew-cat be." ' "

"Now, Dad, we won't have to eat cats and mice," said Dave.

"Cats and mice, cats and mice," echoed Trix.

"No," I said firmly. "As long as I am in command there will be no mice eaten except by the cat, and no cats eaten at all!"

All that afternoon we traveled through rolling country, with the quiet brown hills to the west of us and cultivated lands all about us. Fruit trees were everywhere, their branches hanging low with the weight of plums, peaches, or apricots.

"I wish we were in the grape country," said Dave. "I'd like to go out and sit under a vine and eat and eat and eat."

Toward evening we reached our destination, and got out at a branch station on the outer edge of Oakland. Here we were met by an automobile and whisked through the streets out into the country, with its brown hills, its dull-colored grass, and its huge blue-green eucalyptus trees.

The house we were to occupy lay on a little hill back of the college. We found Miss Flaxman, a member of the faculty, waiting to welcome us, the dining-room table set and dinner hot on the stove.

"Why, it's like coming home!" said Mary.

"That is just what we wished you to feel," said Miss Flaxman. "Will you be too tired, Doctor, to go to the college to-night? It's only a step. One of us will come up to guide you."

"Surely; I want to begin right away to learn about my work," was the answer.

"Then some one will come for you at about seven. But you are sure you will not need to rest to-night? And perhaps your wife will want some help?"

"No, indeed," I answered. "We will not try to unpack, but just go to bed early. To-morrow I shall want to learn a lot of things, about housekeeping and so forth."

"The President had everything sent in that you would need for breakfast, I think. She keeps house, you see, and has children. Most of the rest of us live in dormitories. Well, I won't keep you now. But we will see lots of each other later, I hope." Then Miss Flaxman took her departure, and we started to explore.

The house seemed to be a pleasant, comfortable one, with plants in many of the windows. There was a roomy porch from which we could look down over the college grounds and the road winding between its rows of tall eucalyptus trees. Mysterious they were, with their long drooping leaves and their strange musky smell of the East.

"Oh, Dad, I suppose we'll never see you again now. You'll be working all the time," remarked Mary.

"I think we will have a few more good times together," he laughed. "But I am glad to get back to work. I wonder when my lectures will begin. College commenced yesterday, I believe."

"Will there be any children for me to play with?" questioned Trix.

"Where will I go to school?" asked Mary.

"I shall make many inquiries to-night," was the reply. "But I expect to take Dave down to a fine open-air boarding school the first chance I get, which will probably be next Saturday."

"Oh, Dad, have I got to go to boarding school?" Dave asked.

"Yes siree. You don't suppose you are going to hang around here all the time, do you?"

"I thought I could go to the public school, with Mary."

"I think boarding school is best," his father answered.

At seven the bell rang. Mary ran to answer it, with Trix and Dave following closely, and we heard cries of joy and enthusiasm as the newcomer was greeted.

"Oh, Mother, it's Winifred Ransome," called Mary.

We were all genuinely glad to meet again the tall, dark-haired young girl of twenty-three who entered with Dave and Trix each clinging to an arm. We had known her well in a summer camping-out in New Mexico, but had been more familiar with her in riding clothes. Indeed, I hardly recognized her now in her crisp blue dimity dress.

"I had forgotten you were here," said the Doctor. "It certainly is fine to see you. How are they all at home?"

"I am a senior this year," replied the girl. "The family are well, and sent their love. It is so nice to see you all again."

"Did you come up to be my escort?" asked the Doctor.

"I did indeed. It will seem like old picnics in New Mexico to be acting as guide. I am going to all your lectures, too, Doctor."

"That is an awful thought. Then maybe you can tell me when I am to begin."

"To-morrow, fourth hour. I have been spreading your fame."

"Let us start down now. I am anxious to meet the President, and see where I am to work. Good-by, everybody, I'll be back before you miss me." So the Doctor departed with Winifred.

We all worked together over the dishes, which, as Mary remarked, had been economically used as far as numbers were concerned. Camping out certainly teaches how few dishes are really necessary. One by one we went to bed, some protesting and some eager to get there.

When the Doctor came in about ten o'clock he was full of enthusiasm for the campus. He described the wonderful old "live oaks" and the picturesque eucalyptus trees, and the gardens.

"You will all love it," he said. "And the President is so delightful and cordial. I know you will enjoy the life here so much you will want to stay after our time is up."

"I don't know about that," I replied sleepily. "But I know my time is up for being awake."

So presently all were at rest in the house except the cereal, which continued cooking in the fireless cooker.

"It seems so strange to wake up in somebody else's bed, in somebody else's house, and cook at somebody else's stove," remarked Mary at breakfast. "I think it's going to be lots of fun, though. When do I start school?"

"The schools have begun already," answered her father. "But I have arranged for you to start to-morrow with the daughter of one of the faculty. The high school in Oakland is very fine, I am told. But you will have to be up betimes to get there."

"Now if we only had an aëroplane," observed Dave. "What fun it would be just to scoot to school. You know they have gliders now. Wouldn't it be great fun to get one? Boys can use them."

"Yes, and tumble out of them, too!" exclaimed Mary. "They are quite dangerous, aren't they, Daddy?"

"If I were like the old Quaker I would respond, 'Friend, first thee telleth a lie and then thee asketh a question.' I don't believe there have been so many accidents with gliders. They use them a great deal in Germany," answered her father. "Who wants to go down with me and see the campus? I have my first lecture at about eleven. But before that I would be glad to personally conduct people. This afternoon we are to meet some of the faculty."

"All of us, me too?" cried Trix.

"I think there are some children for you and Dave. Mary is to be introduced to the high-school girl whose name I cannot remember. Your mother and I are to meet some of the faculty. You don't need to worry about clothes, even if our trunks don't come this morning," he added. "Every one will be in working togs."

"If we are all to go down this afternoon perhaps

we had best stay at home this morning and settle. I suppose you haven't heard of any domestics, have you?" I asked.

"I made some inquiries. It rests between an aged white female who is something of a character, the mother of one of the gardeners, or a Chinaman. I must say I think the latter would be more fun. He would go home nights, of course."

"I'd like to see just how much of a character the lady is," was my reply.

After the breakfast dishes were washed Trix and Dave departed with their father, while Mary and I investigated the house and its possibilities. Before we were through making the beds, the trunks arrived, which delighted us both.

"Oh, I'll be so glad to get some fresh things to put on," was Mary's exclamation. "I am so sick of traveling things."

We were in the midst of unpacking when Mary said, "Mother, what will we have for lunch? We've gotten so used to going to the dining car that we've forgotten about planning for meals, I guess."

At that moment the telephone rang and Mary ran to answer it. Somehow this made us feel very much at home, to have a telephone of our own. It was the Doctor speaking. He suggested that we had better lunch at the college and then talk over supplies and how to get them.

"Chapel service is at twelve, just before lunch. Why don't you come down to that? Dave and Trix will show you the way to the hall where it is held. I will join you there and we can all go to lunch

together. The President will be glad if we sit at her table."

This sounded pleasant, and so it was agreed. At about half past eleven Trix and Dave appeared, very dirty as to clothes and faces and hands.

"It's lucky the trunks came," observed Mary.

In a wonderfully short time, however, we were all clean and properly clad.

"We must hurry, Mother," said Dave. "It's a long way."

So we hurried down the hill and through the back entrance to the college grounds where the carpenter shops were and the cows and chickens. There were flowers everywhere, in spite of the lateness of the season, and beautifully kept grass plots, a refreshing sight to us who were used to the green summers of the East. We passed many buildings which Trix tried to name for us, but Dave insisted that we hurry, hurry. There were pine trees, and tall eucalyptus trees, their trunks strangely colored in pinks and yellows and blues. And in front of Lisser Hall, with its white columns, were great palms. But most of all I loved the live oaks, with their delicate foliage and great gnarled and twisted stems.

The Doctor met us at the door of the hall and took us up to the gallery. It was a pretty sight to see all the young girls in their bright summer dresses.

"It looks like a stained glass window," said Mary.

The services were conducted by the President, and so short that even Trix was quiet and attentive. Then we walked back through the long, straight

eucalyptus path that led to the dormitory where we were to have our dinner. In the heat of the day the smell of the trees suggested all sorts of strange oriental perfumes.

"The eucalyptus tree did not always grow in California," the President told us. "The seeds were brought here from Australia by William Taylor for his wife in 1863. But they certainly take kindly to this soil. And we Californians love them."

"I don't wonder," said Mary. "The colors are so pretty and queer."

The private dining room where we ate at the President's table was back from the main room, but was not so far removed that we could not hear the chatter of the girls and their singing. For it was the custom to sing many songs while eating, or as Dave said, "between eating." Two Chinamen waited on the table.

Trix had been placed next to the President's two small boys, one of them her age, the other older. A sudden feeling of shyness had come over her, and she hardly spoke. At first she would hardly eat either.

Presently Dave said in a loud whisper, "Trix thinks it's cats and mice, so she won't eat anything." At which there was a general laugh.

The President assured her that it was chicken and rice, and at last she began to eat.

After lunch Dave and the three younger children disappeared. Mary was to stay with us until the end of high school brought home her schoolmate to be.

"Isn't the parlor beautiful?" Mary whispered to me as we stood and chatted for a few minutes. "I love the red wood of the walls and that great black vase with the chrysanthemums in it. And just look at the pieces of Chinese embroidery. It is like a place in a story book. But, Mother, don't have a Chinaman for a cook. I'd rather have a woman. They sort of scare me."

"I think a woman would be better, too," I answered.

Miss Flaxman, who lived in that dormitory, offered to take us up to the lake, so we wandered out into the bright sunshine. The lake was a little distance away and surrounded by eucalyptus trees.

"What makes it such a curious color?" asked Mary. "It's a sort of robin's-egg blue."

"I believe some copper runs into it and colors the water," answered Miss Flaxman. The girls use it for swimming and picnics and fêtes. They have their commencement pageants here.

"Usually the lake is not full enough in the fall to make it really effective as a stage setting. But we have had so many early rains that they are going to repeat a pageant in November that was given in the spring. It is so full of the spirit of California that the girls begged to be allowed to give it for the benefit of some Oxford visitors who are to be with us then. It will take the place of our usual autumn Shakespeare play which is produced in the Open Air Theater. Your friend Winifred Ransome is to be one of the chief characters."

"THE GIRLS USE IT FOR SWIMMING AND PICNICS AND FÊTES"

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GREAT CLIFFS AND THE LONG SANDY BEACH BELOW

"Oh, I am so glad," said Mary. "What fun it will be to see her act."

"She is quite talented," answered Miss Flaxman.

We went back through that part of the garden which was set aside for the use of the girls.

"They like to have flowers in their rooms, and can get them in this place," explained Miss Flaxman. "If they picked them all over it would soon spoil the looks of the grounds. But here they can cut them to their hearts' content, and have to bear the responsibility themselves if any plants are broken or crushed."

Later that afternoon we met many of the faculty and Mary was introduced to Cynthia Farrell, the daughter of the professor of mathematics. The two went off together to make better acquaintance in the gymnasium, while I discussed housekeeping with Mrs. Farrell.

As a result of this talk, the "Character" came to see us next morning. She was an old German woman, very friendly, quite deaf and a little uncertain of her English. But she was spotlessly clean and agreed to do all our work.

"Of course I vill not can make the beds if I do the vashing. And you vill set the table, yes? The little vun, she vill help old Maria, hein? Und old Maria vill gif her little cakes and grapes und sweeties."

So old Maria was engaged, articles were signed, as the Doctor put it, and we on our parts agreed to take our midday meals at the college or elsewhere, so that old Maria could go about her slow but thorough business.

"Mother, that's the tenth time she has dusted that chair, and I haven't had my cereal yet," Dave complained.

"My dear, Maria has oiled that floor till my shoes won't stay where I put them when I take them off. They go sliding about of themselves," said the Doctor.

"Mother, won't you tell Maria not to take all my books and papers off the desk and put them into my top bureau drawer?" Mary cried disgustedly.

But the clothes that Maria washed were always spotless, and the dishes were never broken and the pots and pans shone and the glasses sparkled. So I bade all have patience.

"Trix has never been so clean in her life," remarked Mary.

"I hate Maria," said Trix. "She is always washing me."

"Yes, but she gives you all the fruit in the house and buys you candy, too," exclaimed Mary. "You ought to love her."

"You get a few goodies yourself, Mary," observed the Doctor. "And now I feel as though we were settled. But I will miss Dave when we take him to school to-morrow."

The conversation just recorded took place three days after our arrival.

"What time do we start?"

"Early,—*muy pronto,* as our Mexican friends would say. I hope Maria will make us a good lunch to take."

"Humpf! Maria! Mother and I will make the

lunch. Maria would have to stop and wash the knife between each sandwich," remarked Mary.

So the next morning we started bright and early, leaving Trix behind with Tom and Jack, her new friends. Mr. and Mrs. Farrell took us all in their big car.

It was a long, beautiful drive through the hills and valleys. We stopped from time to time at wayside stands where tempting apricots and peaches were for sale. We saw the prunes lying out in the fields to dry, just as Mrs. Norton had described them.

The school lay high in the hills, and Dave was greatly excited to find that the boys themselves had put up some of the buildings. There was a deep pool out-of-doors for swimming, and in another place a pond among the trees made a delightful natural theater. So we left Dave, happy but a little lonesome, and returned by another road, along the coast, part of the way, where the great green waves came tumbling over the sand or broke against the rocks, and so back over part of the Lincoln Highway, whose other end begins in the south in far-away Washington.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RING CAUSES EXCITEMENT—WE VISIT SAN FRANCISCO

MOTHER, can't I be in the pageant? Winifred wants me to, and Miss Flaxman says I can, and Cynthia is going to be." Thus Mary pleaded with her parent.

"What will it mean as far as rehearsals are concerned, and when will the performance be?"

"The rehearsals are at different times, but we won't have to go to them all. You see, we are just chorus. It's an historical pageant, and the performance will be on a Saturday afternoon."

"I don't see any good reason, then, for your not being in it," I answered.

"Hurrah! May I 'phone Cynthia right away? Or better still, can't I go down to her house?"

"I think it's pretty late," I answered, "and I don't want you wandering about after dark."

"It won't be dark for an hour yet. Please let me. I'll hurry home."

The Doctor was out, and I yielded. The Farrells' house was not very far away.

Trix and I went out to pick some flowers in our garden, and fed the rabbits that we had inherited from our landlord. Finally Trix went to bed, and it began to grow dark in earnest. I wondered where

Mary was. I happened to go to my bureau drawer and found in it, tucked away at the back, the little box containing the Indian ring with the red and black cord. The ring was of silver except for a quaint jade animal, which might have represented a dragon with some stretch of the imagination. On the back was the familiar swastika, or good-luck sign. There was a large mirror over the bureau, and as I raised my head I saw the reflection of something moving. I turned instantly. There was a window opposite and through that window some one had been looking. I was sure of it.

My heart seemed to stand still for a minute. Then I ran to the open window and looked down. It was almost dark outside, and there were plenty of trees and shrubs below, so that a man might easily be hidden. There was no ladder, but a copper leader running from the roof to the ground was close enough so that an active man might have clung to it and looked in. Of course it might have been Mary at some prank.

I called her name loudly two or three times, and presently heard a far-off response. I confess that I hated to go downstairs, where only one small light had been left burning. Maria had long ago retired, for she believed in the good old saying, "Early to bed and early to rise."

Two or three minutes afterward Mary rushed up to the door. Her face was quite white, and she was evidently excited.

"Mother," she said, "I saw El Lobo down in the eucalyptus grove. I know I did."

"But he died," I objected.

"Dave always said he didn't, Mother. Anyway, I saw him! He was not far from our house. My, I was glad that Mr. Farrell came part way home with me. I just ran as fast as I could when I saw him. Don't you suppose he's after the ring? Where is it, anyway?"

"It's up in the bureau drawer," I answered, lowering my voice. "But to-morrow it goes to San Francisco, and I'll take it myself."

The Doctor was inclined to laugh at our fears and at the possibility of El Lobo's reappearance.

"But I saw him, I know I did," repeated Mary.

I did not mention my own adventure until after she had gone to bed.

"Whatever may or may not be the truth about El Lobo, that ring goes to Frisco to-morrow," I said positively.

"I am inclined to throw it out of the window," the Doctor said. "Let El Lobo have it, if he wants it so much."

"We will take it to the bank to-morrow and then decide. I hate the idea of giving it up," I answered.

"Well, to-morrow be it then. We haven't been to San Francisco yet, except when we drove home from Dave's school. I have nothing particular to do after my lecture is over. Let's go across the bay and do some sightseeing. We will have to start in time to get to a bank. I suppose we might have it in an Oakland bank, but I rather like the idea of having it at a distance."

We did not go on the next day, however, for Mary begged us to wait until Saturday so that she might accompany us. But we all went down solemnly and deposited the ring in the college safe, so that at least it would be out of the house.

Mary went to her first rehearsal that day, and came back full of enthusiasm.

"Mother, the girls are all so nice. Winifred introduced me to a lot of them, and they were just as jolly as can be. They want me to take dinner at the college to-morrow, and may I? Cynthia and I had such a good time."

"Tell us a little about the pageant," said her father.

"It's about the Matilija Poppy, Daddy. It's a sort of symbolic play. It has to do with the beauties of the Indian legends and civilization and then the coming of the Spanish fathers. There are lots of dances, flower dances, and it ends in the Dance of Death. It is sort of sad at the end. The Matilija Poppy means the Indians, and that is the last dance of all. The Mother of the Moon comes in, and her mists of the Dawn. It is so pretty, Mother. I am just crazy about it."

"What parts do you and Cynthia take in it?" I asked.

"We're yellow poppies. Winifred is the Indian hero. She is so handsome! Our dresses are lovely yellow things. If only the warm soft weather holds good and the lake doesn't dry up. Wouldn't that be too cruel if it did and we had to do it in the Open Air Theater?"

"It's pretty over there, too," said her father. "But I suppose this was written for Lake Aliso."

"Yes, they gave it at commencement. One of the seniors wrote it. I just love it. And you ought to see the girls dance! They are so graceful and so beautifully trained."

"Which is the Matilija Poppy?"

"The lovely white one that grows all over the hills. It is very delicate and graceful."

"Yes, I've seen them. They certainly are charming," I said. "We shall look forward to seeing the play. Anything given at Lake Aliso would be good to see. The eucalyptus trees overhanging it are so wonderful and the live-oak grove like nothing else that I know."

The next day was Friday and Mary took her evening meal at Winifred Ransome's table.

"I will walk home with her," the young senior had assured us, "but may she stay for a little while after dinner? We girls are going to have a fudge party. The moonlight is so bright, we shall enjoy the walk back in the evening."

It sounded delightful and Mary did not need to add any special pleading to gain consent.

"Be good and don't eat too much fudge, and be home by nine-thirty," was our last admonition as the two went off together.

"Don't they look pretty?" the Doctor said. "Isn't that a specially becoming dress of Mary's? I like her bright green sash on that white dress. And how jolly Winifred looks in that pale pink with the Indian necklace."

"I wish I didn't have red hair, so I could wear pink," said Trix. "I like pink."

"Bless the child, she's growing up," observed her father. "Never mind about clothes. Let's go out and feed the rabbits with their pink eyes."

We found Maria out in the garden, gathering lettuce.

"I haf just fed the bonies," she called. "One of them is sick, I think. His hair is coming off on his back. Ven you go to San Francisco to-morrow, you buy me a box of Kootikoora. That is goot for the hair. Boney needs it."

"What does she mean?" whispered the Doctor, who was not quite as familiar as I with Maria's mind and speech.

"I expect she means Cuticura. I never heard of putting it on a rabbit, but I don't know why not."

"All right, we'll get you some to-morrow," said the Doctor.

We lingered about the rabbit cage watching the furry little creatures energetically eating their evening meal or chasing each other about. The biggest one did seem to have lost some of his smooth coat.

"Trix ought to go to bed," I said lazily. But no one made any move in the direction of the house.

Finally Maria departed, and we could hear her low-pitched voice singing, "Pack oop der troobles in der old kit pag und Schmile, Schmile, Schmile."

Far off the bell in the clock tower on the campus tolled forth the hour of eight.

"Trix, come to bed this minute," I said, and I turned and firmly walked toward the house.

"Daddy, can't I stay a little longer? I don't want to go to bed."

"You heard what your mother said," answered her father. "I would like you to go right away."

So Trix and I went into the dark, silent house and up the dark, silent stairs.

"You start getting undressed and I'll come right in, Trix," I said. "I have to get a handkerchief from my bureau."

I had a curious feeling when I lit the lamp in my room that I should find that something had happened there. So for a minute I looked stupidly at my bureau without feeling surprised when I saw that the drawers had been pulled out and their contents thrown about the floor.

"Trix, have you been in here?" I called. "Have you been at my bureau?"

"Why, Mother, you know I haven't," came the answer in Trix's high little voice. "I was out with you and the rabbits."

Then suddenly I began to be alarmed. Some one from outside had been in my room and I could not but remember what I had seen in the window a few days before. I said nothing more for fear of frightening Trix, but when she was in bed, I ran down to tell the Doctor.

"Is anything missing?" was his first question.

"Nothing," I answered. "My purse with ten dollars in it was in the top drawer, and a diamond brooch was sticking in the pincushion."

"Then they are after the ring. I tell you, we've got to get rid of it. I will be glad to have it as far

as San Francisco. Only I am sorry for the bank that holds it. We had better report this to the superintendent to-morrow."

The evening seemed a long one, in spite of books and writing, and when half past nine finally came and brought no Mary, both the Doctor and I became uneasy and were quite ready to be angry when fifteen minutes later we heard light-hearted laughter and gay talk. Winifred and another student simply poked their heads in at the door to announce their presence, and then departed hastily in order to be in their dormitories before ten o'clock.

"I hope I am not late, Dad," cried Mary, all aglow with excitement. "We've had such a good time, and we had an adventure, too!"

"What do you mean?" asked her father.

"Well, we were in the old building, you know, where the offices are, and we had been having a glorious time, making fudge and the nicest melted cheese thing, and singing and all. I happened to look out of the window—we were upstairs—and I saw a man trying to climb in on the main floor. It was the window of the office, and the room next the one where the safe is. Well, we had a dish full of boiling water to clean out the fudge kettle, and we emptied it on Mr. Burglar. You ought to have seen him run! We reported it at once and the men are out hunting for him. But wasn't that exciting?"

"Yes," said the Doctor dryly. "I am glad to-morrow is the day your ring goes to San Francisco. I hope nobody will blame me if I drop it overboard from the ferryboat."

"Now, Dad, you simply couldn't do that," exclaimed Mary. "I want my children's children to see it and hear all about its adventures."

"Go to bed now, for we will want to get under way early to-morrow," her father said.

"Aren't you people coming up?"

"Yes, we are coming directly, but you go to bed at once."

So Mary reluctantly departed.

The next morning at breakfast Trix announced that she had invited Jack and Tom to lunch.

"But we are all going to San Francisco," I said.

"Nu, you vould not take the little von," broke in Maria. "She should not go to the big dirty city. She vill stay here mit me und the two leetle boys vill come. Ve vill celebrate old Maria's birthday und haf a party. Dis afternoon ve go take a ride in the boats on the lake in the park. Ve haf it all settled, hein Trixy?"

"Yes, Mother, Jack and Tom are coming and we are going down to the lake with Maria and her family to ride in the boats. Can't I, Mother? Say yes!"

"Very well, dear. But stay with Maria. Don't run off alone."

"Oh, goodie, goodie. May I 'phone to Jack and Tom now?"

"Perhaps it would be better for me to do it," I answered.

When we started out at ten o'clock the three children waved a good-by from the piazza roof and

Maria's last words were, "Please not forget the Kootikoora for boney."

It was about a mile to the express trolleys that were the quickest way to reach the San Francisco ferry. But the road had many pleasant residences and was shaded by trees most of the way. The Doctor had the precious box in his inside pocket.

"It's all perfectly absurd," he said. "It's like a movie. Why can't I come out to the coast to lecture on hygiene and be a common tourist with his family? I certainly shall be glad to get rid of this ridiculous ring."

"By the way, it's Saturday and the banks close at noon," I remarked.

"So they do! But I think we can make it. I have forgotten just how long these ferries take."

It was our first real view of the great harbor, with San Francisco lying across the bay. The early morning mists had been blown away and the blue of the sky sparkled in the water. A sea gull came and perched on our masthead. Indeed, there were plenty of these beautiful creatures flying about or fishing on the crest of a wave. One followed us like the far-famed albatross in the "Ancient Mariner."

"It doesn't look as though that big city had ever been visited by fire and earthquake," remarked the Doctor.

"Was it, Dad? How long ago?"

"About as many years ago as you are old."

"An earthquake must be awful," said Mary. "I remember a picture in my old geography of the earthquake in Lisbon. But Daddy, Cynthia Farrell

said San Francisco was destroyed by a fire, not an earthquake."

"Hum, some one else told me that. Well, anyway, there certainly was a terrible fire, and the telephone lines all were broken and the electric lights went out and the water mains burst. The people found themselves without any shelter or water or light. It was certainly frightful. But they were plucky, and started right in rebuilding as soon as the first crisis was over. You can see for yourself that it looks as though there never had been any conflagration. One good thing, too, was accomplished. Old Chinatown was destroyed, and the new one will never be as dirty or as dangerous."

"Or as interesting," I added. "But I fancy the old one was a little too interesting sometimes."

"The police found it so, with its subterranean passageways and rooms and opium dens."

"Daddy, what fun. Isn't there anything like that now?"

"They tell me that the modern Chinese quarter is quite clean and sanitary and aboveboard. It seems to be full of shops. But I suppose there may be concealed places of great interest. I am afraid we won't see them."

We were about halfway across the bay when the boat came to a sudden stop. Something had gone wrong with the machinery, and we were at a standstill. The Doctor began to be troubled.

"We haven't any too much time," he said. "If we stay here long, the banks will be closed before we get there. And this abominable box will remain

with us for two more days. I declare, I believe I'll drop it overboard." He took the box out of his pocket as he spoke and held it toward the rail.

"Daddy, don't!" cried Mary. "I want my ring. You mustn't throw it in the water."

At that moment a Chinaman who had been apparently watching us from some safe place of concealment darted out and struck the Doctor on the wrist with a stick. Involuntarily he dropped the box, which fell to the deck. Mary and the stranger sprang for it, but the Chinaman got it first and instantly fled toward the interior of the boat. The Doctor and Mary started in pursuit.

"Stop thief," cried the Doctor. And "Stop him," cried Mary.

The man got to the back of the boat and jumped overboard.

"Did he steal something from you?" one of the ship's officers inquired.

"He took a valuable ring," replied the Doctor.

"There he is, swimming in the water," cried out a passenger. "Why not launch a boat and pick him up?"

An officer gave the orders to put out in one of the lifeboats. But before this was accomplished, the swimmer disappeared, and though the crew rowed about for some time, nothing could be seen of him.

"There is nothing to do now, I fear," the Captain said, "but to report your loss to the police. Would you know the man again?"

"He was Chinese," I said.

"I didn't get much of a look at him," said the Doctor.

"He was certainly a Chinaman," Mary repeated.

"He looked young and slight to me," said one of the passengers.

"I am afraid you will not see your ring again," remarked another passenger.

"It is probably at the bottom of the bay with the thief," added another man.

"I sincerely hope so," the Doctor whispered to me. He thanked the men who had launched the boat, and the captain. By that time the machinery had been set to rights, and we proceeded on our way. Mary was trying hard not to cry.

"I can't bear to think of its being lost to that horrid El Lobo," she said.

"Come, we won't talk of it any more," replied her father. "I think we are well rid of it."

"But you will report it to the police, won't you, Dad?"

"Oh, I suppose so. But I think we will not see it again, and I am glad of it."

"We shall not have to make the bank now, so let us plan what we will do first. Where shall we have lunch?"

"Let's go to a nice tea room or dairy place," I said.

"Oh, Daddy, I want to go to a really spiffy place. Can't we go to a big hotel or restaurant?"

"Since you need consolation, suppose you choose, Mary. We will proceed to a large and pleasant place with wonderful food."

"Hurrah, Dad, let's go."

"It sounds expensive," I murmured. But I was outvoted, and seeing that I could not help it, I found myself rather enjoying the idea.

So it was decided to go to a fine hotel on one of the main thoroughfares. We were a little early for most diners, and we found few in the elaborate dining room. The head waiter became quite friendly while we were eating, especially when he found we were from the East.

"It was in this hotel," he told us, "that a large luncheon was given to President Wilson on the last trip before his illness. It was a great occasion."

"I wish I could have been here then," said the Doctor. "I suppose there was an enthusiastic crowd. Did he seem ill?"

"I have been told that he never spoke better."

"It was a tragic journey," said the Doctor.

"Why, Daddy?" Mary inquired.

"Because Wilson was a sick man when he started. But he was so anxious to have people believe in the League of Nations that he believed in with all his soul, that he went right on through the West, talking everywhere for it, until he suddenly broke down, a martyr to what he thought a great ideal. He was very brave, and it was a great tragedy. He was like a man wounded desperately who would not leave the battlefield."

"I see," said Mary. "Did you ever meet him, Daddy?"

"I am glad to say I did once, before he was President.

"Well, let's be going. If we don't start we won't ever get there."

"Where?" asked Mary.

"Chinatown."

"Oh, Dad, I am crazy to see it. By the way, don't forget the 'Kootikoora' for Maria."

"That would never do, would it?"

We bade good-by to the friendly head waiter, and inquired of him the best way to get to the Chinese quarter. It was a short ride in the street car, we found, and then a walk up the steepest hill that we had seen for a long time.

"San Francisco is like Rome, all built on hills," remarked Mary. "I'd hate to have the cable break some time and the car start going backward."

"Let us devoutly hope it will not," I remarked.

We wandered through the principal street of Chinatown, sunny in the early afternoon. We went into great shops, where courteous Chinese tradesmen allowed us to walk at will, admiring the beautiful silks or rich garments displayed for sale. There were carvings from the East and spices and sweets, all giving forth mystery and charm. There were wonderful jewels, and priceless china and porcelain. And brooding over all were the strange perfumes of the orient, weaving a spell of romance.

We met some Chinese and also a few sightseers like ourselves. Mary wanted to buy souvenirs for her friends, and I thought of Christmas not so far away, so we went into a shop where there were small and reasonable articles for sale. Even we could tell the difference between the things made for the

western trade and those which might have adorned the house of a mandarin himself.

The Doctor took us down a side street to the interesting Telephone Exchange Building, which looked more like a temple than the temple itself.

"I thought all the houses would be built this way," said Mary. "It must be funny to call numbers in Chinese."

There were several booths and in one of them a tall man was standing. Suddenly he turned as if to come out.

The Doctor started. "By Jove, that's El Lobo," he whispered to me. "Let's get out of here. I don't think he saw us."

So we left the building quickly.

"Why didn't you want him to see us, Dad?" asked Mary.

"Because you got his ring, my dear. He doesn't look like a man who would forget."

"But we haven't got the ring now," objected Mary.

"True, but the question is, does El Lobo know that? I wish I knew what he was 'phoning about. It would tell us a lot, maybe."

We wandered back into the city.

"Is it time to go back yet?" I asked.

"No, I think we might ride out to one of the missions. We could go to the Cliff House and see the sea lions, only I'd like to take Trix there. Or would you rather go out to the old World's Fair grounds?"

"I vote we go to the mission," said Mary. "I sort of like churches."

So to the mission Dolores we went, with its ancient bell that had rung for the first time in the year 1776, when another bell was ringing in far-off Philadelphia.

As we crossed the bay again toward evening the sea mists were stealing in over by the Golden Gate, but the city itself stood up proudly against a glory of gold in the sky.

CHAPTER IX

THE GREEK THEATER AT BERKELEY

THE Doctor brought up a number of letters that evening, one being from Mrs. Norton. In this she described going up the cañon to find that the automobile had survived the flames and was apparently as good as ever.

"It seemed to bear a charmed life," she wrote; "for the woods had burned all around it. Indeed the flames performed a lot of strange tricks of this sort, burning one barn and leaving a house right next to it. But Trix will enjoy this. We found a nest of squirrels, or a family of them, that had burrowed into one of the big back cushions. They chattered most indignantly when we routed them out. We are planning a trip to the giant sequoia trees later in the fall. Can't some of you come? We have room for three in the auto. Jack and his wife are well and send love, as do we all."

There was a letter from Dave also, astonishingly long for him.

"DEAR MOTHER:

"The school is fine. I like it.

"There is a boy here named John Alden, and one named Jack Desmond. All the boys call him Jack Dempsey 'cause he fights a lot. There was a man

here last night who talked about a fellow named Burbank. Have you ever heard of him? He had moving pictures. There was a picture of a big cactus like the ones in New Mexico without the prickers as Trix calls them. There was a picture of a plum without a pit. He told us about how Burbank made twenty thousand prune trees grow in nine months. He did it by sticking the prune slips on almond trees that grow fast. I call that pretty good. He was a great scientist and did a lot for his country. He did it by killing a lot of trees and plants that weren't any good and keeping the good ones. Please send me some collars *pronto* and I've got to have the Story of a Bad Boy right away, too.

"This is an awful long letter.

"Your loving DAVE."

"Daddy, what does he mean?" gasped Mary, who had been seized by a hearty fit of laughter during the reading of the letter. "How did he make the trees grow by killing a lot?"

"Don't you know anything about Burbank, Mary? He has been working now for fifty years, I suppose, improving nature. That sounds funny, but it is true. He has been helping nature, just as I do when I put fertilizer on my garden. You have heard of 'grafting,' I suppose."

"I thought graft was something connected with politics and corruption."

"Hum, sometimes. To graft means to put a cutting or slip from one plant on to another, where it really does not belong. Take the case of Mr. Burbank. The prune trees would take a long time to grow and he wanted them in nine months. So he

planted the quick-growing almond and grafted on his prune shoots. He operates on trees as I do on people. He wants certain things in nature and when he does not find them, he goes ahead and tries by combinations to get them. He destroys the trees and plants that do not come up to his standard or that do not help him in his schemes, and only keeps the perfect ones or those that will be useful to him. So gradually he has evolved the spineless cactus and the pitless plum. It is all very wonderful and seems like magic—till you remember that I can take blood from a well person and put it in the veins of some one who is sick and health will come to him. I can take a bone from an animal and graft it on a cripple. It seems like magic, but it is true. It is a miracle of science."

"I'd like to see Burbank," said Mary. "I'd like to meet a celebrity. Are you one, Dad?"

The Doctor laughed. "Far from it," he said.

"But do you know, I think we ought to plan out a little what we are going to do. The weeks are fairly flying and our week-ends will be gone before we know it. We want to see everything, but we can't. I want to go up Tamalpais and see Muir Woods and maybe drive out to Bolinas and have some swims. I want to take Trix to see the sea lions at the Cliff House and the museum there.

"Then this trip to the sequoias and the Yosemite sounds good. But we can't all do that. It costs too much, and anyway we are not invited."

"Don't forget Mary's pageant," I said. "And

I am anxious to get a sight of the Greek theater at the University of California."

"Surely—I hear there is to be a play there. Perhaps we can get in somehow."

"And I want to see Leland Stanford," put in Mary. "I think I'd like to go to college there for a year or two. I'd like to get away. And oh, Dad, I heard to-day that there was to be a visit from the fleet. We must see that. We can see it from the Pre—Pre—what do you call it?"

"The Presidio—that is a big park where the army post is. We must surely go there. Perhaps Dave could come up for that. When is it?"

"Why, I think a week from Saturday. I'd just love to go aboard one of the boats."

"Well, we seem to have a long program. We surely must see all we can, but I don't see how we can do everything. Suppose you and Trix go to the sequoias with the Nortons and I take Mary to Tamalpais and Muir Woods."

"I don't see that that is fair," I answered. "The Yosemite and the big trees are very important for every one to see, especially the children. Why shouldn't Dave and Mary go?"

"I don't think the Nortons could be asked to take the children alone. How about you and Trix and Dave going? Mary and I could go up Tamalpais and Muir Woods."

"Couldn't we all go on the way home?"

"Not if we motor as we intended to. Yet, maybe we can. We shall have to look up maps and things. Suppose then the four of us plan for Tamal-

pais and Muir Woods next Saturday," said the Doctor.

"I think that is the date for the performance at the Greek theater," I said.

"And the week after is probably the fleet?"

"Yes, Dad—"

"Well, then, the week after."

"That's the pageant here, Daddy."

"Oh, I give it up! We'll simply go when we can. Let's ask the Nortons to postpone their trip and tell them we all want to go. I declare, there are too many things to see in California!"

It was a few days after this that Mary asked if she could not spend Friday night with Winifred. There seemed to be no good reason for refusing, so consent was given.

"Don't forget that we go to the university to see the Greek play Saturday afternoon, so come back early in the morning. We ought to start by eleven. We are to lunch with one of the faculty there."

"Is Trix going?"

"No. Trix will stay home as usual. Or rather, the invaluable Maria is to take Trix and Tom and Jack on a picnic. Don't stay awake all night. And by the way, I wish you would ask Winifred if she is any relation to the Miss Ransome who has the excellent girls' boarding school?"

"Are only excellent girls allowed there, Mother? But I did ask her and she said no. It was a different family. Cynthia and I are going to bowl now, if there isn't any one else there. Won't you come too, Mother?"

"I think I will. It's a long time since I have bowled."

There seemed to be some sort of mystery connected with Friday night. Mary had a manner of suppressed excitement when she took leave of us.

"I don't believe she'll sleep a wink all night," said the Doctor.

"She'll tell us about it some day," I observed, "though maybe not to-morrow."

Apparently the Doctor was right, for when Mary appeared at nine-thirty Saturday morning she was a weary-looking girl, pale with dark rings under her eyes.

"But oh, Mother, it was fun. Can't I come here to college, Dad? They are so nice here."

"What happened?" asked her father.

"Oh, I can't tell. It's a secret. I promised not to."

"Cross your heart and strike me dead?"

"Now, Dad, nothing so foolish!"

"You are sure of that? Now I am a clairvoyant, a magician. I see hooded figures stealing out at midnight and wandering through the eucalyptus grove to the lake, where strange ceremonies took place. Some freshmen were initiated into the secret society of the Natatores."

"Now, Dad, that name is too silly."

"Well, what was the name? I see some mermaids swimming and sporting about in the water."

"Dad, who told you?"

"I tell you, I am a magician. Isn't it true?

Didn't you all, or portions of you, get into the lake?"

"I promised not to tell."

"So you did. But I made no promise. Now 'fess up, or I'll go and shout the glad tidings."

"I think Dad's mean, Mother. The girls will think I didn't keep the pledge."

"My dear, I won't ask any more questions. You must surely keep your word. But I thought secret societies were taboo."

"We did have such fun!" Mary sighed.

"You look as if you had," remarked the Doctor. "Also there is a suspicion of dampness about the top of your head. These early dawn baths are wearing."

Mary put her hand to her hair, and then rushed off upstairs.

"Don't forget we start on the eleven o'clock car on the upper track. Not the one that goes to Frisco," called her father after her.

"Those girls must have had a jolly time," he added with a grin. "I wish you could have been present."

It was quite a walk to the platform where we took the cars into Oakland. But the eucalyptus trees gave us pleasant shade. We passed the President's house, with its lovely gardens and the two feathery pepper trees.

"It seems so funny to see palms about in front of the houses," said Mary. "I feel as though there was to be a party and they were decorations."

"I can't quite get used to them either," I said.

"What are we going to see to-day, I mean in the theater, beside the college buildings?" Mary asked.

"The play is 'Elektra,' I think," said the Doctor. "A gruesome tragedy. But it will be beautifully done, and as it's Greek, we will like it. I must say I like the cheerful ones better."

We found the university very large. "It's like a whole city," Mary said, "all spread out; and what a wonderful great white tower. Can we go up?"

"We certainly can. It has a fine view," our host told us. "This place has more students than any other university in the United States, but I am not always sure that that is an advantage. To paraphrase an old friend of you New Englanders, 'We don't always crack the nut and bring out the meat.' But there is something inspiring, too, in the size of us."

We were standing on the balcony at the top of the tower and gazing over the wonderful panorama of buildings and brown hills and blue sea. It was beautiful from whichever point we looked.

"You will find it very hot in the theater," added our host. "But I think I succeeded in getting seats on the shady side. So, who knows, you may need your furs. That is one of the peculiarities of our climate."

The Greek theater was very large, with its great stage, and its columns between which the actors came and went. And all open to the blue sky and the bright sun overhead. For there was no roof, and very little shade, as we soon found. At the back

there rose trees, but these did not cast any shadow upon the majority of the audience. It was a beautiful spot, and a fitting background for the great Grecian play we were to see. Even the ancient Greeks could not have asked a better.

"It seems like Greece, doesn't it, Mother? At least I always thought of Greece like this. All brilliant sunlight and white columns."

"I have pictured it that way, too. Let us pretend that these pretty, gaily gowned girls are Athenians and the boys in their white flannels really dressed in togas with wreaths about their 'hyacinthine locks,' as Homer would have put it," said the Doctor.

The tragedy was presented in a way that left nothing to be desired. Every word could be heard, and the illusion was perfect. Mary and I found ourselves dissolved in tears, sitting in modern California, while university students with only a few professional actors told forth the woes that fate prepared for the ancients in the days when the world was young.

"It is so beautiful and so terrible, Mother. But I think if it hadn't been done so well, I would have wanted to laugh." So Mary spoke as we started home. "I am awfully glad I saw it. I didn't want to come a bit. But the choruses were so lovely. I wish there had been more of them. I wish we could wear those long Greek clothes."

"Do you think I would look nice in a short toga too?" asked her father. "And how would you play tennis in a long garment?"

"But the Greek girls wore short things when they played ball, Daddy. I've seen pictures of them."

"That's right. They are pretty to look at anyway. But I think in our cold New England winters I prefer trousers."

It was late when we reached home and we were all tired, especially Mary. Even Trix, after a day of joyous excitement with Maria, seemed ready for bed.

"There isn't anything on for to-morrow, is there?" asked the Doctor, yawning, about nine o'clock. And I assured him that there was not.

"Nothing but church. I think I'd like to go to church," I observed. "I feel as though we had gotten very far from New England."

"I would like a peaceful Massachusetts Sabbath myself," replied the Doctor with another yawn.

But the morning brought its own excitement. The front page of the newspapers which Maria brought us on her return from early service bore the enormous headlines, "Bank in San Francisco robbed. Safe broken open in the early evening by daring bandits. It is not certain how many were involved. Nothing missing from the safe."

"Wasn't that the bank my ring was to go to?" asked Mary.

"Yes, indeed. It looks as though El Lobo had been at work. He probably was hugely disappointed. He does not seem to know everything. I wonder who has the ring anyway?" said the Doctor.

"But El Lobo had no right to wear it, if what that man in Santa Barbara told you was true," said

Mary. "Only the head of the society. I don't believe El Lobo is that."

"Neither do I," answered her father. "I am glad they are fighting it out between them and we are no longer involved."

"I am afraid I'll never see my ring again," Mary said disconsolately.

CHAPTER X

THE PACIFIC FLEET VISITS SAN FRANCISCO

THE day the great fleet was to arrive dawned at last with promise of fair weather, although mists still hung over the Golden Gate when we made our early start for San Francisco.

The ships were due at noon, but from daybreak the ferries and trolleys and trains were crowded with sightseers, anxious to get positions of advantage.

"You'd think there was only one grand stand instead of a great park to watch from," I said.

"Just wait," observed the Doctor. "You will find the shores crowded so that back of the fifteenth line no one will catch a glimpse of the water even, let alone the fleet."

The trolleys were filled to overflowing, so we finally took a taxi out to the Presidio, where we could find our way on foot. We had provided ourselves with field glasses and food and two folding camp stools, and were prepared to spend the day.

"I wish Dave were here," said Trix. "He'd love to see the boats. Can we go on them, Daddy?"

"Not to-day, but I hope we can on some other day. I have a fancy that I know the surgeon on one of them. Perhaps we could get aboard some day when the public are not admitted."

The park, with its trees and well-kept roads, was a pleasant place in which to be. Presently we found ourselves with a small group on a little hill, not at the water's edge, but commanding a fine view of the bay, where the last streaks of fog still lingered.

We sat down, and Trix declared she was hungry. "Can't I have a sandwich?" she begged. "Just one, with peanut butter in it."

The thought of a sandwich was pleasant to all, although it was only half past nine.

"But we did start so early, Mother;" so Mary explained the hunger of all of us.

The sandwiches were passed. Then in a few minutes, Trix, more outspoken than the rest, insisted that she was still hungry. So the sandwiches were passed again, and no one refused. Then, "I am so thirsty, Mother," pleaded Trix.

So some fruit was distributed and we sat in perfect contentment amid oranges and plums.

All the time the sky was getting bluer, and the sea, stirred by a fresh wind, was a mass of sparkling blue and white. On shore an incredible number of people were gathered, moving slowly in one direction. Whole families, with babes-in-arms, were wedged between automobiles. It was like a colony of ants, watching from where we sat.

"It is strange to think what a different place this is from the Spanish presidio where the prison stood. How astonished the old hidalgos would have been," said the Doctor.

"Even the early pioneers might express some surprise!" I said. "Your famous great-aunt who

lived here in the days of the Vigilance Committee, —what do you suppose she would say to these orderly crowds and the extremely efficient police?"

"Did your great-aunt live here then, Daddy? Was she a Californian?"

"By adoption and grace, but not by birth. She was one of the pioneer women. Your grandmother, Mary, came out here in the early fifties to visit. She went by way of Panama and rode across on a donkey."

"Oh, Daddy, what fun. It must have taken months to do it. I suppose they went by sea after they got through with the donkey. How old was she—Grandmother, I mean?"

"About your age. She came to be with her aunt and uncle. That was in the famous days of the Vigilantes, when it was unsafe to walk out of an evening in the city of San Francisco. The search for gold had brought all the riff-raff from everywhere. Sometimes it was easier to dig the precious metal out of the pockets of an honest citizen than out of the earth. Every corner had its gambling den and its saloon.

"But when things get too bad, honest men cannot stand it. Finally a few good citizens, among them your great-uncle, formed a committee, the Vigilance Committee. They swore to bring back order to their city, and they did. They policed the streets. They took murderers whom the so-called law would not condemn, and after a fair trial hanged them, when they were proved guilty. As soon as the thugs and desperate characters found that the law of the

land would be enforced, they calmed down a bit and went out of town for their health.

"There was a most remarkable minister here then, William Taylor. He was the same man who introduced eucalyptus trees. During the worst days of '49 and '50 he preached in the streets every Sunday, to enormous crowds. He didn't mince matters either, but spoke his mind out about gambling and drinking and killing. He spoke most informally and used to address the people personally who came to hear him. He was loved especially by the sailors whom he tried to help. But in all the seven years of his street preaching, he never allowed a collection to be taken up for himself."

"What happened to him, Dad?" asked Mary. "Did they kill him?"

"No, he went to be a missionary somewhere in Africa or Asia, I think."

"Why aren't there more really great men now, Daddy? The people I know are all about the same. I don't know any heroes."

"Why, yes you do. There were plenty of heroes in the great war, and some your own cousins."

"Oh, in war, of course. But I mean in peace times. They don't brave dangers like the old pioneers."

"You ought to read the stories of the winners of the Carnegie medals each year. There is certainly plenty of heroism there. Then think of the scientists who brave danger all the time in their research work. Remember Reed, who discovered the yellow-fever germ. Take Madame Curie, who discovered the

uses of radium, knowing all the time what a dangerous tool she was experimenting with."

"But I don't know Madame Curie or the Carnegie medal people," objected Mary.

"Maybe I can contrive an introduction some time. I knew a man once who slept in a tent down in a place infested with yellow fever. He did it to prove that unless he were bitten by a particular kind of mosquito, he wouldn't catch the fever. He even slept in the bedding that had been used by a yellow-fever patient."

"Oh, Daddy, did he catch it?"

"Certainly not. But that showed to the world that the health of that place depended on the killing of the mosquito, and had nothing to do with climate or night air. That fellow was pretty brave, I think."

"But, Daddy, he knew he wouldn't catch it, didn't he?"

"You can't be certain of anything in science until it is proved. But if you won't grant his heroism, how about the other fellow who deliberately got himself bitten by a poisonous mosquito, to prove that that was the way the fever could be caught?"

"Yes, he was brave, Daddy. I wouldn't have liked to do that. Still, I think it would be easier than doing what those early settlers did. Think of the lonely plains and the Indians and hunger and thirst and wild animals. How did they ever do it? and they took children, too, didn't they?"

"I often wonder how the youngsters did survive,"

said her father. "Did you ever hear of Virginia Reed?"

"No. Who was she?"

"She was one of the children we were speaking of, a twelve-year-old girl. In the midst of the worst part of the journey through the wilderness her father got into trouble with one of the other men. He was declared to be in the wrong, and was sentenced to banishment. He was turned out of camp with his horse, without a gun or food. But that night after dark Virginia and a young man she had persuaded to go with her followed Mr. Reed's horse by the tracks in the sand. They carried his rifle and food and drink. If they were discovered by their own people or were found by Indians, they knew it would mean death. They could hear wolves and wild cats, not to mention coyotes. It was a terrible trip, but they finally found the man, who in despair had given up all hope. You can imagine his joy at seeing his brave little daughter and getting back his trusty gun. Virginia wanted to stay with her father, but he would not allow it. So she and her friend crept back to camp again, undiscovered, and told Mrs. Reed, who was quite heartbroken, the good news of their adventure."

"Wasn't she wonderful, Dad? I wish I could do things like that."

"Well, I hope you may never have to do it for me. Perhaps now we have lost the ring, we can look forward to an uneventful life."

"What is an uneventful life?" asked Trix.

"What we're doing now," laughed the Doctor,

jumping up. "Let's take a look around. This is almost too uneventful."

"I want to go too," said Trix. "Where are you going?"

"Just for a walk. I don't believe we can find a better place to see from than this. But I would like a little excitement."

"When will the boats come?" asked Trix.

At that moment we heard a very faint sound like a distant gun.

"What was that?" asked Mary.

"I believe they are coming," cried the Doctor. "Where are the field glasses?"

"Let me look; let me look!" was Trix's cry.

"Yes, I can see them through the glasses—way off there to the left. Just coming in through the Golden Gate. No, Trix, you must wait till your mother has looked."

"There isn't anything much to see yet, silly," said Mary. "Wait till they come nearer."

The little black bobbing hulls were not much to see, in truth. But they were coming steadily nearer over the sparkling sea, with the white foam tossing from their bows. We could see the white smoke from their guns and then later could hear the report. The guns at the fort began to answer, and people cheered and waved flags, and handkerchiefs and napkins from their lunch baskets. Some enthusiasts even threw their hats in the air.

Nearer and nearer came the stern gray ships, their battle turrets dark against the sky. Through the glasses we could see them plainly, even to the

SAN FRANCISCO'S GOLDEN GATE

See p. 225

WINTER SPORTS IN THE YOSEMITE
(Photo from National Geographic Society by Boysen Studio, Yosemite, California)

sailors on the decks and in the rigging. It was a sight to thrill the heart of even the most peaceful minded. Faintly over the water came the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner," played by the band on one of the ships. Bright against the sky floated the stars and stripes from the stern of each boat.

"I am glad they are coming back, not going out to war, Mother," whispered Mary. "I can see the men so plainly. I suppose a lot of them may have been in the war, don't you think so?"

"I shouldn't wonder. See the submarines there, Mary," said her father. "See, Trix, that is a submarine, over there. Your eyes are so good, you can see it without the glasses." He lifted the youngster on his shoulders.

"Is it that funny little one? Oh, Dad, please let me look through the glasses," begged Trix.

It took her a few minutes to manage them. But suddenly she exclaimed, "Why, Dad, there is a goat or something on the big boat; and oh, I can see the men! Why it's right up close. How can it get so close? Why, where is it?" she added, as she put the glasses down and the boat receded again into the distance.

So we stood and watched the great fleet go by, amidst the shouts of the crowds, till it vanished about the point of land and disappeared from sight.

"Oh, let's go down to the shore and try and catch a last glimpse of them," begged Mary.

"I'd rather not take Trix down in the crowds. Why don't you and your father go? We will wait here," I suggested.

"Come on, Dad, come quick," and Mary started off toward the shore.

The people around us followed like sheep, and soon Trix and I were deserted, much to her disgust.

"I want to see the boats, too, Mother," she said.

"I don't believe they will see anything more. Come, let's set out the rest of the lunch and get it ready for them when they come back."

"Are we going to have a fire?"

"No, I don't believe we'll bother."

We unpacked the rest of the lunch. There was a wonderful looking pie that Maria had made for us and some stuffed eggs.

"Do we have to wait for the others?" asked Trix. "Can't we eat ours now?"

"I think we had better wait. They won't be long."

But it was hard to restrain Trix as the minutes dragged on and the others did not return.

"Mother, some ants are eating my sandwich," said Trix finally. "I want to eat it myself."

So I divided the remaining food into four portions, and Trix made short work of her share.

"I shall not even leave one crumb for those horrid ants," she remarked. "And, Mother, you'd better look out for the other things 'cause a whole family of ants are going for them."

But before the ants had been able to get even a portion of a meal the Doctor's familiar whistle was heard and he and Mary appeared. They were hot and hungry, and had seen no boats.

"Oh, Mother, it was such a crowd," said Mary. "They were so mussy and tired and the place was full of papers and banana peels. But who do you think I saw in the crowd? El Lobo! I am sure of it. He saw me, too, and tried to follow us. But he couldn't in the jam. Do you suppose he thinks I still have the ring?"

"It is astonishing how bold he is," observed the Doctor. "He is wanted by the police for that train holdup, and yet here he is, wandering without disguise through such a crowd as this. I have a great mind to give a tip to the nearest policeman. I hate to think of that fellow at liberty."

"Let the police look out for him themselves," I said. "Let us not get mixed up in anything more!"

"But I want to get my ring back," murmured Mary. "My goodness, Mother, what a wonderful pie this is of Maria's. I wish she could come east with us."

"By the way, how is 'Boney's' hair getting on?" asked the Doctor. "I have been so busy that I forgot to look. Trix, do you know?"

"He's getting white woolly stuff all over his back," answered Trix. "It's awful funny."

"I should think it might be."

"If only Maria wouldn't wash me so much! She washes me in places you never did, Mother."

"Nonsense, Trix, I washed you all over," I objected indignantly.

"But not every day. And you used to let me wash myself and then I could skip, but Maria washes me herself. She's awful."

"She loves you, Trix, and she's just as good to you as she can be," said Mary. "She takes you all over and gives you things."

The last traces of the picnic were cleaned up or buried, so we all arose and started back toward the far distant trolley. The roads were comparatively free by this time, but the walk seemed very long and hot. Trix was tired and wished she were home with Maria. But even the longest way must end, and at last the welcome sound of a trolley gong could be heard.

"Dad, you will take us on board one of the ships, won't you?" begged Mary.

"If I can, I certainly will."

"Me, too, Dad?" asked Trix.

"The whole family," answered her father. "We will all hang together or we will all hang separately."

"Daddy," whispered Mary as we got on the crowded trolley at the gate of the park, "I saw El Lobo get on this car."

"It may be just a happen-so," he responded. "But if that man tries to follow us, I'll report him to the police. I won't stand for any nonsense."

We were a tired party when we arrived at the ferry. This, too, was crowded, but at least there was fresh air on the upper deck, and the possibility of sitting on the edge of a lifeboat or a coil of rope.

Presently Mary left us to buy some odds and ends, and we stood and admired the gulls with Trix. We could see the fleet anchored to the south

of us. We were almost across the bay before Mary returned, in high excitement.

"Daddy, I've spoken to El Lobo," she whispered. "He asked me if we had the ring and I told him no. I said the Chinese secret society had it, and that he could not get it. I told him he couldn't wear it, anyway, because he wasn't the chief of the society, and they'd kill him if he wore it. He asked me if I wanted the ring very much, and I said yes. He asked me how much we'd give for it, and I said a lot. He wanted to know if we'd give five hundred dollars. I laughed and said no. He said he'd get it for me for five hundred dollars. Then I came back here. I knew you wouldn't give that much, would you?"

"I'd sooner give him five hundred lashes!" growled the Doctor. "Don't ever talk to that scoundrel again, Mary. If you do, I shall certainly inform the police."

"What would you pay for the ring, Daddy?" Mary asked.

"Not a lead nickel," was the answer. "And remember, you are not to talk to that man again, and if he writes, I want to know it."

CHAPTER XI

THE PAGEANT

THE evening before the pageant, the Doctor was to lecture at Leland Stanford University. It was out of the question for Mary to go, as she had a rehearsal, and I hesitated to leave her and Trix alone with old Maria. But I was finally persuaded. We had heard so much of Stanford that I was anxious to visit there.

Indeed, we found it different from anything we had seen. The brown Romanesque buildings, the great palms, the fountains, all seemed like the East, and one half expected to meet turbaned figures instead of very modern boys and girls. There was a great swimming pool out in the open which Mary and Dave would have appreciated.

We were taken over the beautiful modern library and climbed the tower to look over the rolling hills and acres of fertile fields, flowers and vegetables, fruit trees of all kinds.

"The college was certainly a princely gift for a woman to give as a memorial," the Doctor said to me, as we descended the stairs. "They tell me that during the time the money questions were being settled, Mrs. Stanford and the faculty, too, lived on next to nothing. It is an inspiring story in the

history of colleges. I wish Mary could see this place."

"I wish she were here too," I said. "Somehow I feel uneasy about their being at home alone."

"But think of Maria and the 'bonies.' "

"Yes, I think of them, but they don't console me."

It must have been at about that moment, as we heard afterward, that Mary, her rehearsal over, was eating a picnic supper with Winifred and several others of the cast under the eucalyptus trees. It was a beautiful, moonlight night and very tempting.

"Let's start a secret society," Winifred said. "It shall have ten members."

All this Mary confided to me several weeks later. The rules included a monthly meeting beside the lake, after dark, and an annual sunrise swim in the lake, to take place on the first night of May. Mary objected that she would not be able to be present, and thereupon she was elected an honorary member, and promised to get a swim somewhere on that day, when possible. The California Poppy was to be their flower. The meetings were to be always at midnight under the eucalyptus trees. They tried to remain out that night until twelve, but gradually yawns took place of conversation, and finally some one moved to adjourn the meeting.

"I can't keep awake," Winifred herself observed, yawning prodigiously. So slowly they trooped back to their several halls.

Two of them accompanied Mary home, and found

to their consternation that Maria had locked and bolted and fairly glued the doors and windows.

"Well, what are you going to do now?" asked Winifred.

"Wake up Trix or Maria."

They rang the doorbell without effect, and then threw stones at the upper window. Finally a head swathed in clothes appeared at the window and Maria, who always spoke German when excited, demanded, "Ver ist da?"

"I'm sorry to wake you. It's me, Mary."

The head looked out further and presently disappeared. In a few minutes, Maria, in a large canton flannel nightgown and carpet slippers, opened the door just enough to allow Mary to slip in.

"Remember that we must always write to each other on the anniversary of the founding of the society, no matter where we are," whispered Winifred.

"We can't all write to each one of us," Mary objected.

"No, all send word to me, or whoever happens to be grand commander, what you are doing, and I will send the word around. Don't tell any one. Good night."

Maria gave her charge a good scolding.

"Vat time of night for a goot girl to be coming home," she said. "I vill tell your Popper und Mamma."

But somehow Mary bribed her not to.

"I will tell Mother myself, some time," she promised, "if only you won't."

So it was that I heard about the secret society many months later. Will there ever be another meeting, I wonder?

The day of the pageant was unusually clear and pleasantly warm. At three we all gathered beside the lake, which reflected in its clear blue-green the gay colors and tall shapes of the eucalyptus trees. It was hard to tell where land began and water ended. The visiting dignitaries from England for whom the play was given were seated with the President of the college. The bright colored dresses of the audience made them seem almost like part of the performance.

Through the trees came a group of lovely dancers, the mists of the dawn, and following them, Manalar, Sun goddess and mother of the ancients.

Then the Indians, children of nature, appeared with their tents, and started out to hunt. It seemed hard to believe that we were not looking through magic glasses into the past. While the Indians were hunting, a chorus of wild flowers danced about. Poppies, cornflowers, bluebells, dandelions, in the gayest of bright colors, flitted in, and Trix recognized Mary and Cynthia among the yellow poppies.

Presently the Indians returned in triumph from their hunting, to Trix's great delight. She preferred them to the flower spirits.

"Are they real Indians?" she asked. "Did they come from New Mexico?"

"Of course they aren't," replied young Jack, the nine-year-old son of the President. "Why, there's

Nancy and Eleanor and lots of the girls. They are just pretend Indians."

Trix was finally convinced when she recognized her old friend Winifred in the young hero, Cocopah, whose wedding with the beautiful maiden Matilija was celebrated in the true Indian fashion. Presents were exchanged and Cocopah carried his bride to his tepee or tent while the fathers and relatives spread seeds and grain before their path to signify the good wishes of all for fruitfulness and plenty. The strange, primitive Indian dances with which they celebrated the wedding were interrupted by the strains of a Latin hymn, and a weary company of Spanish missionaries appeared. They were made welcome by the hospitable red men, who took a childish interest in the red clothes and strings of beads which the padres brought. Only the old chief and Cocopah and his bride were suspicious and followed afar off.

"Is it all over?" demanded Trix, when the Indians disappeared behind the hill.

"No, indeed," answered Jack. "There's going to be a war dance, and lots of exciting things."

There was an interlude when the beautiful Manalar appeared and sorrowfully led away the wild spirits of tree and wood who had dwelt so happily with the Indians, but could not abide the white man and his ways.

"Aren't the Indians coming back, Mother?" Trix wanted to know.

"Don't you think this is pretty?" I asked. "Don't

you like to see them dancing among the dark oaks and the great tall eucalyptus trees?"

"I would like to dance, too," said Trix. "Why couldn't I have been a little Indian?"

The second part of the pageant showed the baptism of an Indian baby. But the ceremony was rudely interrupted by a whirlwind dance of the ancient spirits, who appeared to lead the Indians back to their old faith.

"Now comes the war dance," whispered Jack.

The sound of the war drums and the war chant of the savages could be heard, and presently Trix was delighted and half fearful at the antics of the Indians, who finally rushed off to massacre the padres. But the Indians were repulsed, and fled to the hills.

Only the lovely bride, Matilija, remains, searching for her lover, who has not returned with the braves.

The old order has changed and the white man is the conqueror. Trix hid her head on my shoulder and cried when poor Cocopah staggered in and fell beside Matilija, whose mourning was cut short by a bullet from the Spaniards.

"It's not real, Trix," whispered her father. "They are just pretending."

"But I'm so sorry for them," murmured Trix.

"Look, Trix, what is coming," I said.

Springing from the ground apparently came two lovely white figures, the Matilija Poppies, who embodied the spirits of the lovers, united in death.

"I don't care," said Trix. "Why did Winifred have to be dead?"

Nor was she happy again until the pipe of peace was smoked between the Indians and their conquerors and companies of Spanish marched in with supplies and reinforcements for the padres.

"I confess I sympathize with Trix," said the Doctor, as we arose to go. "It is a sad play, and only too true. With our boasted civilization we have done a lot of harm to the weaker races."

Mary joined us in her pretty yellow dress.

"Wasn't it lovely, Mother?" she wanted to know. "I don't think I ever saw anything so beautiful. Wasn't Winifred fine? She looked so like an Indian with her black hair and eyes. I am so sorry it's over. I'll never have such a good time again."

"There was some one else who looked pretty," observed her father. "Yellow is very becoming to you, Mary."

"Did you really think I looked well? I am so glad. Won't you come and tell Winifred you liked it, because none of her family are here, and I think she's sort of blue."

So we hunted up the hero and congratulated her.

"I wish your father and mother and your Indian friends could have seen you," said the Doctor. "They would have been proud of you."

"It was a fine pageant, wasn't it? I think every one did wonderfully. They say the English people are delighted. We are going to have a dance and a spread. Mary can come, can't she?"

"Surely," I replied, "if some one will walk home with her. Do you stay in your costumes?"

"No, but we have our pictures taken right away. We'll see Mary home. And thanks for liking our play."

"Mary is surely having a good time," observed the Doctor. "I am afraid home doings will seem quite tame when she gets back to New England again."

"The West has treated us all very well," I remarked. "What fine hospitable people we have met, and how friendly they have been to us."

"It is the pioneer spirit, I think," the Doctor said. "In the days of the frontier the traveler found a hearty welcome after the dangers and trials he had passed through. I think their descendants are keeping up the tradition. May it never pass away from the West as it has to some extent from the East."

CHAPTER XII

TAMALPAIS AND MUIR WOODS—TRIX GETS LOST

ONE afternoon in November the Doctor received a letter from Mr. Norton. It said that they had suddenly decided to go out and visit the big trees in Sequoia Park. They were going over the week-end, and could they take Dave?

"I say, let him go," said his father. "And what do you think of the idea of our going out to Muir Woods, Tamalpais, and Bolinas over the week-end while Dave is visiting the big trees elsewhere?"

"How about Mary's school?" I objected.

"It won't hurt her to take a day's holiday. We can go to Muir Woods Friday, spend two nights there or on Tamalpais, get the stage to Bolinas Saturday morning, and spend Sunday afternoon swimming. We can return Monday. It sounds good to me. There is to be some sort of conference here Monday morning, and I have no lecture."

"Yes, but Mary. She will lose two days of school."

"It can't be done in less time, so I think she will just have to lose them. She's standing well in her classes and a holiday will do her good."

So it was decided. The Doctor sent off a letter to Mr. Norton and to Dave's school, and we prepared our camping things and bathing suits for the

four-day trip. Now that the pageant was safely over it seemed wise to do our sightseeing as soon as possible.

"We may have rain, so go prepared for it. But it won't be any wetter than the rains at home."

"It was nice to be able to count on the weather in September," I remarked.

"But, Daddy," said Mary, "Winifred says no one goes in swimming in Bolinas now. It's too cold."

"If it is too cold, we won't go in," answered her father. "I don't believe it's colder than on the coast of Maine. And at least we can picnic on the sands. I must say I like the uncertainty of not knowing how the weather will work out," he added. "I got tired of nothing but sunshine and dryness. They tell me the beach is beautiful at Bolinas. I hope we have a clear morning for Tamalpais. I would hate to be enveloped in fog and have no view."

"How do we get there?" I asked. "It sounds like a long trip, Tamalpais. It is a fascinating name."

"We go to Frisco and then by boat for about an hour. Then we take a train at a place called Sausolito and change to the mountain railroad after a short run. The Tamalpais road is eight miles in length and is the crookedest one in the world. It really is not a long trip. Mary can attend morning session at school and we will pick her up in Oakland."

As often as we had taken the trip through Oak-

land, I never tired of it. The beautiful school buildings, Lake Merritt lying blue below the brown hills, with the great white hall facing it, the fine municipal tower, all were most attractive to me.

"How would you like to go up on top of the tower and see the prison?" asked the Doctor, on the Friday morning as we started to get Mary.

"Where's the prison, Daddy?" asked Trix.

And, "Have we time?" I questioned.

"Yes, we have time, and I'm rather curious to see it. It certainly is a healthy location for a lockup, and I should think would be quite difficult to escape from. The only access must be the elevator and perhaps a stairway. Let's go."

Permission was easily obtained, and soon we were shooting up into the high tower, much to Trix's unease.

"Why do we go so fast?" she asked. "It makes me feel funny."

There were certain gates to be passed after we left the elevator. We were not allowed to go to the cells, but we did climb a steep spiral staircase with a uniformed attendant, and finally came out on a little balcony overlooking the town and surrounding country.

Trix was greatly excited, and wanted to hunt for the lake where Maria had often taken her. Then she found the distant grove that sheltered Mills College, with the brown hills back of it where she had often climbed.

To the north lay Berkeley, with the University of California. To the east the charming Piedmont

hills, while across the bay San Francisco smiled on us from her many hills. Beyond was the Pacific, that we could not see, although the fresh breeze brought with it a smell of the ocean.

"Do prisoners ever escape from here?" asked the Doctor.

"I believe one man did once. At least he tried it. But most of them seem quite content to stay put," answered our guide. "Have you time to stop and see the finger-print room?" he added.

"Oh, Dad, what is it? Can't we stop?" begged Trix.

"We shall have to hurry, though," answered her father.

So we descended part of the little staircase and were led into a small room full of large books.

"Where are the finger prints?" asked Trix.

The gentleman in charge was amused. He bade Trix put her thumb on a purple-ink pad and then place it firmly on a piece of glass. She was surprised and delighted to see the strange criss-cross of lines that she had made.

"That is your finger print," he said gravely. "Now if you ever get lost or do something naughty we can find you by the finger print."

"How could you? You're just fooling," responded that young lady.

"No, I'm not. Do you see all those books? Those contain the finger prints of most of the rogues west of the Rockies. It's a fine collection, and no two of them alike."

"That always seems so strange," I said.

"It is queer," he answered. "No two thumbs in all the world make the same mark. Here's one," he added, opening one of his books. "It was made by a Chinaman we call Wing Wang. Heaven knows what his real name is. He was suspected of several crimes, the ringleader of a secret society that extends across the Pacific. But we couldn't get anything on him, so we had to let him go. He's quite young, too, and if ever a man had rascal written on his face, that fellow has."

We departed after expressing our thanks, and I must say I felt glad when the iron gates shut back of us and we could descend freely in the elevator.

"Most folks find it easier to get in than to get out," our guide observed in parting.

It was necessary to hurry now. We found Mary waiting outside the school, and all rushed for the trolley and then for the ferry, where we settled in temporary peace till we reached San Francisco. Then there was another rush to the Sausolito boat, which we reached just in time.

A strong wind was blowing from the sea, and the bay was full of whitecaps. We sat in the bow of the boat and ate the wonderful lunch that Maria had prepared for us. But we had to hold our hats with one hand while we ate with the other. We passed Mare's Island, with its navy building and a training ship anchored beside it, and then the island with the grim prisons looming stern and white in the sunshine.

It was a beautiful trip, and we were almost sorry when we reached Sausolito, and changed to the train

along with a crowd of people whose varied costumes filled Mary with delight. There were more khaki trousers in evidence than we were used to seeing in New England, and from the back it was hard to tell often whether the wearer was a man or a woman, though often the latter wore on her head a large hat and veil which contrasted strangely with her trousered legs. Walking trips around Tamalpais and Muir Woods were evidently popular among the young folks of the neighboring cities.

The country was beautiful all along, but especially so when we took the mountain railroad and began the crooked climb to the top. Twisting and turning and looping, it wound its way over precipices and up fearful inclines. It often seemed as though the engine were about to leap into space. But somehow it stuck to the track, and finally the woods were passed and the bare summit loomed above us.

The view began to open up about us, and wonderful it was. The air was so clear that we were assured by one of the other passengers that we would be able to catch a glimpse of white-capped Shasta, three hundred miles away. So we reached the top, where we found a comfortable hotel perched.

Here we changed into tramping clothes and started to explore the bare summit.

Trix was greatly impressed by the full sweep of the ocean to the west of us. She kept saying, "Daddy, is that really all water?" and "How far does it go, Daddy?" She was sure that the great

Sierras to the east were the Rocky Mountains of her beloved New Mexico.

We looked through the great glasses and saw Mount Shasta as we had been led to hope.

"Oh, if we could only go there some time and climb!" said Mary. "I do so want to climb a real mountain."

"You did last summer in New Mexico," I answered.

"And got out of breath, too," added her father, his eyes twinkling as he spoke. "One has to train carefully to be a mountain climber. But I am not denying that it would be fun."

We were all tired, for it had been a long day. So we ate an early supper and retired with the sun, which sank into the Pacific Ocean from a cloudless glory of gold.

"We shall have a fine morning, I think," said the Doctor as we turned in.

But when we awoke in the morning a genie seemed to have transported the hotel elsewhere. Gone were ocean and land, and only the tip of Mount Tamalpais could be seen rising above the gray fog of early dawn which had come in from the ocean. But gradually the east colored, and suddenly the clouds were full of color like a great opal, soft pinks and yellows and blues spread below us. Then the sun rose through the fog, and the whole air was filled with light.

"It is more beautiful than I could possibly imagine it," said Mary. "I am glad we had the fog. It is wonderful."

But before we had to leave the top, the fog had drifted away and the sun shone down on the finest view that one could wish to see.

"But I am glad that beautiful mist was there at first, Daddy," said Mary. "It was like drawing a curtain, when it went."

"If Dave were here, I know what he would be wishing for," said the Doctor.

"I know too—an aëroplane," cried Trix.

"Oh, it would be wonderful to be up in one. But you know, Daddy, I believe it was something like what you see from an aëroplane when we were looking down on that cloud of fog this morning."

We left Mount Tamalpais some time after lunch and descended part way, then changed to a branch road and so finally reached Muir Woods late in the afternoon. It was strange and mysterious after the bleak volcano we had left, bright in the full light of the sun. Here the track ran through dim woods and finally ended near a tiny settlement of rustic wooden houses, the Inn and its camps.

"Mother, it is like a Hans Andersen fairy tale," said Mary. "I am sure we will meet with the seven dwarfs at least."

The proprietor of the Inn showed us the camp we would occupy and then pointed out to us the trail to the redwood grove. The sunlight flickered through the pines, a quiet, peaceful light. It was hard to believe in the gorgeous colors in which the sun had clothed itself the evening before.

We descended a steep path and finally found ourselves among the gigantic redwood trees.

"They are older than the Roman Empire," the Doctor told us. "And these are not the oldest nor biggest. Dave will be seeing the sequoias to-day, some of which are big enough to allow a carriage to pass through an arch cut through the trunk."

"Look, Mother, what is that beautiful bird there?" asked Mary. "Why, it's some sort of blue jay, I do believe, only bigger and handsomer than the fellows at home. Come, Trix, let's see how near we can get."

They crept away toward the bright blue creature, perching on a branch of one of the big trees. But he did not wait for them, but flew a little way and then sat and scolded until they got near again, when he repeated the performance. It seemed as if he were playing a game with them.

There had evidently been a fire in the grove at some time not so long ago, for a few of the trees showed great charred scars where they had been burned. But the ancient giants were too hard and tough to be destroyed, and had survived the fire as they had the storms and the centuries.

It was so silent. Only the scream of a jay or the song of some distant bird broke the stillness. Suddenly we heard Mary call, "Trix, Trix, where are you? Are you hiding from me? Trix!"

"I don't like the idea of Trix running off alone in these woods," said the Doctor, and he joined his voice to Mary's.

There was no answer.

"Don't you suppose she is hiding and will jump out and scare us?" I said.

"I don't know. She must not run away here. It would be so easy to get lost."

So we all called, but there came no answer. Presently Mary joined us.

"We were following that old jay," she explained, "and I had to stop to fix my shoe laces. I thought Trix was waiting but she must have gone on ahead. We had crossed the stream and were going up the other side."

"You don't suppose she went up to the house?" I said.

"Mary, show me where you were and then run up to the Inn and see if she is there. I will go up that other bank and call. Come back at once and report," he added.

So Mary pointed out the place she thought they had crossed and then ran off up the trail.

"Tell them to send down some one if she isn't there," called the Doctor. "I am worried," he added.

We started up the steep wooded slope shouting Trix's name at intervals.

"I can't understand how she could go so far," observed the Doctor. "It can't have been more than ten minutes before Mary missed her. In this stillness we ought to make ourselves heard at quite a distance."

Presently we were joined by Mary and two of the employees of the Inn.

The short November day was drawing to a close, and the shadows lay heavy in the woods. We began to be very much troubled. The idea of poor jolly

little Trix all alone in those dark woods fairly made me sick. Every minute would take her farther away unless by some lucky chance she wandered toward us. The night would be cold, and who knows what wild animals might be lurking in the depth of the forest.

Suddenly Mary said, "I am sure she couldn't have gotten this far without hearing us. I believe she got into some trouble and doesn't dare answer. Ugh, there must be a skunk around," she added, with a sniff.

"Maybe Mr. Brown's skunks escaped," said one of the men. "He has a family of them up near the Inn."

"Don't go over that way," cried Mary, "it's getting stronger and stronger. He must be right there."

"Keep still for a second," ordered the Doctor.

We all stood silent. Not a sound could be heard but our own heart beats for two or three minutes.

"I thought I heard a child crying," said the Doctor. "I am sure I did," and he darted forward.

"Dad, the skunk must be over there," called Mary in warning.

But the Doctor was right. Crouching under a tree, sobbing, we found miserable Trixy, frightened and hating herself and the horrid black pussy that had led her astray, covered her with bad smells and then deserted. At her father's orders, Trix removed her dress and the next moment was gathered into his arms, weeping hysterically.

Mary sat down on the ground and laughed until

the tears rolled down her cheeks, while the two men bade us hasten home ere darkness came. But their voices were husky with merriment. Poor little Trix! Her adventure might have had a serious ending, but as it was, none of the rest of the party could quite get away from the funny side.

"Why didn't you answer, when we called?" asked her father, who had maintained a sympathetic gravity.

"Oh, Daddy, I was scared to. I smelled so and it was my clean dress."

"How did you happen to follow the wood pussy?"

"I was afraid she was lost," sobbed Trix. "But I wish I hadn't. I thought it was a nice kitty."

This was too much for me. Perhaps the relief from our late anxiety made me light-headed, but I had hard work to keep from bursting into laughter. Even the Doctor's gravity suffered, and he gave forth a queer snorting sound.

The way did not seem so far back, and presently we saw the lights at the Inn twinkling like stars through the darkness. There were long strings of them leading from camp to camp.

"It is a German fairy story, Mother," said Mary. "All those lights are like Christmas candles and we are bringing home the lost princess."

At this innocent remark from Mary, the Doctor suddenly burst out laughing. "I'd hate to say who the enchanted Prince must be," he managed to say between snickers. "Oh, Trix, Trix, you scared us awfully, but you certainly have given us a funny adventure."

"Daddy, you're horrid," said Mary. "Imagine even a very bad fairy turning a prince into a skunk."

I washed Trix as best I could, and she ate her supper clothed in a clean nightie and wrapper. She had recovered from her misery and fear, and was hungry and happy. But she gave me an extra hug as I tucked her in that night. "Mother, I'm glad I'm not in the big woods alone," she whispered.

CHAPTER XIII

WE MEET EL LOBO AND HAVE AN ADVENTURE AT BOLINAS

WE were awakened early the next morning by a hungry blue jay, who perched on a big tree right beside our cabin and announced himself loudly. Indeed, there were a number of these beautiful creatures about and they were exceedingly tame, not to say bold.

"If their voices weren't so awful, Mother," said Mary. "They have such lovely clothes, but when they screech like that, it's horrid."

"Well," remarked some one, "I remember once seeing a charming girl leaning out of a window. She was as pretty as a picture till she opened her mouth to call to her little sister who was somewhere down the block."

"Now, Mother, that's mean."

"I didn't say who it was!" I replied. "But voices are quite as important as clothes. Perhaps Mr. Jay would be too perfect if he could sing beautifully. However, he did us a good turn this morning, for we have to make an early start."

It had been decided not to take the train, but to walk down through the woods and meet the Bolinas stage at the crossroads over the downs at the foot of the mountain. But before we went, the

Inn keeper led Trix and Mary to see his pet skunks. He had a whole family of them, and took one of the babies up in his hand.

"They are only unpleasant when they are frightened," he told them. "The little ones, they are like kittens, they will play and run after things."

Trix, after her experience of the day before, was afraid to touch them, but Mary took one of them up and was delighted at its soft fur and pretty ways.

After breakfast we started down the trail through the woods, feeling like early explorers. It seemed something of an undertaking to reach the cross-roads in time for the stage when not one of us had been there before or knew the way. But the Doctor was sure we could do it, and so we started through the mysterious woods.

"Somewhere about here is a grove where they hold a festival called the 'High Jinks,' " the Doctor told us as we walked along. "It consists of some beautiful pageant or other and is attended by artists and notables generally. I have often wished I could see it. These tall trees certainly make a perfect stage setting."

It was a rough road we had to travel after we left the pines and came out on more open rolling country. We saw herds of cattle on the near-by hills as we followed a stream down through a gully.

"I'd hate to meet El Lobo here," said Mary suddenly. "It's awfully lonesome country, isn't it?"

"I'd hate to meet him anywhere," remarked her father, who couldn't bear to hear the bandit mentioned. "But it is a wild place. I think of the Lorna Doone country as being like this, the downs of Dartmoor. Can't you imagine those picturesque ruffians galloping about here, or John Ridd riding off to find Lorna? I am getting to love the brown hills, though I never thought I would. Of course the rains have freshened them up a lot."

It was a gray day, and as we reached the lower country we found mist enveloping the tops of the hills, making them look higher and more mysterious.

Much to my astonishment, we finally reached the crossroads, fully half an hour before the stage was due. It was a silent, lonely place, with a few cattle afar off and one solitary farm. We sat down beside the road, for Trixy at least was pretty tired after her cross-country tramp. Presently we heard the sound of a motor cycle, which annoyed the Doctor.

"Fancy using a noisy thing like that in this romantic, uncivilized spot," he grumbled. "I wonder who the wretch can be?"

He did not have to wonder long, for the motor cycle came in sight at that moment, going at a fearful rate of speed. Just as it approached something apparently went wrong with the front wheel, and in a moment machine and rider lay in the ditch. We all ran at once to help.

Mary outdistanced us, and called out, "Dad, it's El Lobo! It can't be possible!"

"I hope it finished him," murmured her father.

But when he came to get the fallen cyclist from

the wreck of the machine, El Lobo seemed only stunned and cut about the head.

"You can't kill that creature," said the Doctor disgustedly. "Now if it had been somebody worth while—"

"I don't care who he is, I'm glad he isn't killed, Dad," Mary remarked. "And I believe you are too."

Presently the man opened his eyes, and his surprise was laughable. Surely we were the last people he expected to see. Then he smiled unpleasantly.

"You said I could not get the ring, Señorita," he laughed, looking at Mary. "But I have him here," and he pointed to his breast.

"Look here, my man," the Doctor said sharply. "Don't say another word to my daughter. If you do, I'll give you up to the police. Remember you are wanted at Santa Fé and other places."

El Lobo scowled, and I really do not know which made his face more unpleasant, his smile or his frown.

"You had better leave me alone," he said. "The society to which I belong would take quick revenge if I were given to the police. You know the red and black cord? The red is blood, the blood of our enemies."

"Don't be a fool," the Doctor replied. "That may be all right down in old Mexico, but in the East where I live they keep men like you shut up where they belong."

El Lobo muttered, "Try it and see," but as he

attempted to get to his feet, he fell back and turned very white.

"He's probably hurt more than I thought," said the Doctor. "I wish a car would come along that could take him to some town. I am afraid there may not be room for him in the stage. Perhaps we could get him to that farmhouse. Mary, you run up there and ask for help."

"I thought you wanted him to be killed," said Mary.

"Don't be foolish, child. A doctor always wants to help," I said. "Run as fast as you can."

It seemed a long time before Mary returned with two men and a small auto. In the meanwhile all the Doctor's efforts to revive the bandit were in vain. He went back to the farm with the others, leaving the rest of us to wait for the stage.

About ten minutes later the great lumbering car came in sight. We could hear it puffing away from a distance, even before we saw it. There was barely room for us all, and Trix had to sit on her father's lap.

"What did you do with Lobo?" I asked.

"He is pretty badly hurt internally, I think. The farm people promised to take him into Sausalito this afternoon. He seems to have as many lives as a cat, so he may pull through. I did all I could for him in the short time I had. I feel as though I ought to have stayed by him. But keeping him quiet is about all he needs now till they get him to a hospital. The men at the farm promised to rig up a sort of bed for him in the car and drive care-

fully. They were going to 'phone to a doctor who comes around to see them when they need one. But I feel like a deserter."

"If you are going to be miserable about it, why don't you go back?" I asked. "We shall probably meet a car going in that direction before long. You could get a lift."

"But you and the children! I don't know when I could join you. If I went back at all, I'd feel that I had to go on with them this afternoon and get him to the hospital. No, I think I won't go back. If they do what they say and get that other doctor, it will be all right."

To the relief of all of us, we met a car not much later which our chauffeur informed us held the local medical man. We hailed him and learned that he was coming in response to a call from the farm. The two doctors exchanged all necessary information, and then the stage proceeded on its way, with a rumble and creaking.

Presently the road came out on the cliffs, and we could see straight down hundreds of feet, it seemed, to the sea rolling below us.

"I would hate to meet any one on this road," said Mary. "It's always going around corners where you can't see ahead, and it's not very wide anywhere. I wish he wouldn't go so fast."

It was a wild, beautiful country, and we traveled over places that seemed impossible to eastern eyes. At last the village of Bolinas could be seen across a bay, and the road descended rapidly to sea level.

"This was certainly worth doing," said the

Doctor. "I would not have missed that drive for a lot. I fancy the old stage drivers and the pony express men went just that way, dashing around corners in a fashion that apppeared reckless, but was really perfectly safe."

"What was the pony express, Dad?" asked Mary. "I remember seeing a stamp in your old collection marked 'Pony Express.' I always wondered what it was."

"It was the mail route between Salt Lake City in Utah and Sacramento. When California became a state in 1850, it was about three thousand miles from the central government. Mail came via Panama and took twenty-one days, and came about twice a month. Later there sprang up a stage route going through Los Angeles, New Mexico, and Texas. That took about as long as the steamer route, but came twice a week. Then some brilliant fellow, a man named Russell, I think, got the idea of sending light mail by pony across the Sierras. It took just ten days. Think of it! They traveled at the rate of twenty miles an hour and the men were selected for light weight as well as courage and skill. They had relays of horses at frequent intervals, and changed the men also, but not so often."

"But it must have been terribly hard. How could horses go that fast?" asked Mary.

"They couldn't, for long. But I remember the story of one fellow who was known as 'Pony Bob.' There was a war with the Paiuti Indians on just then, and when Bob got to the place where he was to change—he had ridden seventy-five miles, by the

way—the other man refused to go on for fear of the redskins. So Pony Bob, nothing daunted, started off on a fresh horse and rode one hundred and ten miles farther, only stopping to eat and to change horses.

"He rested up for nine hours, and then started back. When he got to one of the stations he found, to his horror, that the Indians had been before him, had killed the men and taken off the horses. So he had to go on with the same pony."

"He was a wonder, Daddy. I don't believe people nowadays could ride like that," said Mary.

"I'd hate to have to myself," answered her father.

"It must have cost quite a bit," I remarked.

"I believe they charged five dollars for every half ounce, which was a good deal of money for those days. But people did not write as many letters then as they do now.

"Those pony riders had to contend with the snows of the Sierras as well as dangers from Indians. But they seemed to get through every time. One man rode between Santa Fé and a town in Missouri, a distance of eight hundred miles, in five days and thirteen hours."

"You mean one man rode all that way without any rest, Daddy?"

"He didn't have time to rest, and he only changed horses in every one hundred miles or so."

"If that was nowadays the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would get after him," I said.

"I imagine the horses had to suffer as well as their

masters. But the riders were usually very fond of their mounts. Only of course the mail had to get through on time. They were a wonderful lot. I suppose the Union Pacific Railroad is safer and faster, but it would have been fun to travel west with the Overland Mail."

By this time Bolinas was close at hand, a straggling village broken up into groups of houses, and presently we stopped in front of the post office, where every one got out. The Doctor had made some inquiries of the stage driver, and had found that he knew of two places at least where food and rooms could be had. One was close at hand and desirable on that account. For, "I'm half starved," Mary had been saying, and Trix clamored for her lunch. The other hostelry was on the bluff overlooking the water.

"If they can take us, I vote we go there for the night," said the Doctor. "We want to be near the water and get all the swimming we can. But let us eat at once in the place near by."

So this was agreed on, and every one felt better after a delicious dinner. We found by 'phoning that the house on the heights could accommodate us. So we hired a man to take us the short distance, bag and baggage, for the Doctor had decided that he was tired of carrying things. The street was a pleasant one, and the climb to the bluffs not difficult. The house commanded a view of the scattered community about, and the great cliffs and the long sandy beach below that stretched for miles.

It was not long before bathing suits were donned

by Mary and the Doctor, and the four of us were sitting lazily on the beach. The waves rolled in and broke in lines of white surf. Trix and I had become discouraged and had decided not to try the swimming.

"I like this," said the Doctor. "It's so peaceful."

"Aren't you ever going in?" demanded Mary.

"Oh, presently. But it looks very cold in spite of the sunny afternoon and I want to take my time about it. I hope you all brought down your sweaters."

"You ought to know, Daddy," remarked Mary, "for your head is resting on a pile of them."

The lazy blue waves proved even colder than they looked, and neither of the bathers stayed in long. They came out spluttering and shivering. But they said it was worth all the time and trouble to get into the clear water and be tossed about by the whole Pacific Ocean, as the Doctor phrased it.

"Is it the whole ocean?" Trix asked in wonder. "This that we see? Where does it go to and what is an ocean?"

"It's a big piece of water like a lake only lots, lots bigger, and it goes way over to China, where all the Chinamen who wait on the table at Mills come from," answered her father. "Let's have a race on the beach to get warm."

"But I want to know what makes the waves so big when they look so little and soft," Trix continued.

"I am afraid I can't answer that. But we had a pretty nice bath in this big tub, didn't we, Mary?"

"I guess so. But one dip was enough for me! Ugh! Let's go up and dress."

It was decided to take our supper down to the beach. So we next went shopping and bought supplies for a picnic at a pleasant little store.

"Where do you suppose El Lobo was going when we met him traveling so fast?" asked Mary as we wandered toward the shore.

"I have been wondering that myself," the Doctor answered. "Wherever it was he was in too much of a hurry."

"Do you suppose we shall ever hear how he gets on?" Mary said.

"Maybe so. They know my name and address at the farm. I told them to let me know what happened, just out of idle curiosity."

"Did you tell them his name?"

"Yes, I thought it was about time the authorities knew where he was."

We had wandered along the shore for some distance and finally sat down at a rocky place with the great bluffs above us. Here the Doctor and Trix made a fire, and we cooked bacon and eggs. We ate our modest supper, with the noise of the surf in our ears, just as unconcernedly as if it had been the coast of Maine. It seemed strange to think of seven-year-old Trix on the shores of the Pacific. She had been playing in a little pool of water in the rocks, and presently called out, "Mother, the pool I was playing with has all gone into the ocean. What's the matter with it?"

At the same moment Mary remarked specula-

tively, "You know, that rock I was looking at when we first came has disappeared."

"That looks as if the tide were coming in. I think we'd better start home," said the Doctor.

We gathered our things together quickly, but were troubled to see how narrow the beach had become. We were forced right against the bluffs in some places.

"We have come farther than we thought," I said. "Can we get back?"

"We may have to go up the cliff," laughed Mary. "Of course we can get back. But it's a pity we haven't Dave's aëroplane."

Presently we came to a place where the water seemed to have cut in. There appeared to be a path leading to the top of the bluffs, but for a few yards our way over the beach was blocked.

"I don't like this," said the Doctor. "I wish we had Dave's aëroplane indeed. We shall have to go up that path."

At that moment we saw descending it a man whose general appearance did not appear reassuring. He was evidently Chinese, though clothed like an American of the poorer class. He was young, and with a most unpleasant face. For some reason I thought of the finger-print man and his description of Wing Wang. However, the newcomer answered the Doctor's questions civilly enough, and informed us that the climb to the top was short but hard, and that we had better not try the beach again.

He held up his hand as he directed us. On his little finger he wore a silver ring.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ROAD FROM BOLINAS AND AN INVITATION TO A BASEBALL GAME

"DID you see the ring on that Chinaman's hand, Daddy?" Mary exclaimed softly to her father. "I am sure that it is like mine or is mine. And that man, he looks like the Chinaman who stole it from you on the boat going over to San Francisco."

"That's right, he does. I was wondering where we had seen him before."

"And I wonder if he isn't the man whose finger prints they had in the Oakland jail," I remarked. "Somehow he suggests the description that was given us there of Wing Wang, or whatever they called him."

We walked along the path for a short distance discussing the affair. The Doctor was speculating as to what had brought him there and whether the stolen ring would enable the Oakland police to get the man they had long been seeking a pretext to catch.

"I should not wonder if the same business brought him and El Lobo," he added. "They seem to be a precious pair of rascals."

At that moment we met two men of rather ordinary appearance, who asked us if we had seen a Chinaman.

"He was dressed like a plain American, but you could tell he was Chinese," the newcomer said.

"Is anything wrong?" demanded the Doctor. "We saw such a one about ten minutes ago. He was going toward the beach, but what he will do there I can't see unless he is off for a swim."

"Is the beach covered?" questioned the stranger.

"Yes, the tide nearly caught us. Who is this fellow anyway, you are hunting? He looks like a tough customer."

"He is, just that. He's wanted for a number of things. We are plain-clothes men from San Francisco. We're after him to-day for a daring holdup on the Sausalito road. He stopped an auto taking a man to the hospital. The man will probably die as a result. But the two other men with the sick man fought off the bandit and gave us a description which enabled us to trace him thus far. We must hurry on now."

"Good luck to you. What did you say his name was?" the Doctor questioned.

"He's known as Wing Wang. This is the first thing we've ever been able to land on him although he's known to have been mixed up in a lot of other things.

"It looks as though El Lobo had come to grief again," I observed, as the men hurried away.

"He'd better not have stolen the ring," said Mary. "I told him he had no right to it and that the other fellows would kill him if they knew he had it."

The day was fast growing to a close and the

light so dim by this time that we had hard work to keep on the path which wound along toward the village.

Suddenly we heard a whirring noise which grew louder, and presently an aëroplane came into sight flying fairly low, so that it just missed the tops of the trees.

"It is going to land somewhere near," Mary cried. "I bet you it's after that Chinaman."

"I wonder," said her father, almost equally excited. "I'd like to see. They can't land on the beach, but I suppose he may know of a way to get up again, farther along. There are plenty of places on the bluffs."

The aëroplane flew a little farther, and then we could hear the changed sound of the engine as the machine came to earth. It was so dark now that we could see nothing. Then we heard the firing of shots.

"Oh, Dad, we must wait and see what happens. Can't we go back?" begged Mary.

"I should think not," I replied. But I could see that the Doctor was as eager as Mary.

"They may need help," he said. "I wonder if I ought to go back."

"Of course you ought," Mary cried.

"It seems to me that we need you at this moment more than those detectives," observed some one.

But while we stood in hesitation, waiting, there came a second volley of shots and then the whirring of the aëroplane could be plainly heard, as the machine rose from the ground.

"Whatever has happened is all over," said the Doctor regretfully.

"Somebody may be hurt. You ought to go and see," Mary suggested.

"There is some truth in that. But it's so dark now I don't believe I could find my path. However, I'll go a little way and call out."

"I think Trix should get back to our boarding place," I said firmly. "I shall start on with her and Mary. It will be hard enough to get there as it is in the dark and not knowing just how to go."

"You are perfectly right. Just wait a minute and then we'll all go on together," the Doctor replied, much to Mary's disgust.

It was not long before we heard voices and the two plain-clothes men reappeared, carrying with them a limp form.

"Did you get him?" queried the Doctor.

"We did, by all that's lucky," answered one. "We had quite a fight for it and he almost made his get-away. But there was only one man in the machine and he had to look after his engine, so we caught our fellow. He's pretty well smashed. He tried to get into the aëroplane just as it was starting, but a shot took him in the arm and he tumbled off. We ought to get him to a doctor."

"Dad's a doctor," cried Trix, her eyes big with excitement.

"That's lucky. Will you come along with us? I suppose you can't tell anything here, it's so dark," the detective said.

"You might as well get him to a house," answered

the Doctor. "And I want to take my family to the place where we are staying."

We lost our way several times, but presently reached the Inn. The good lady who kept it was more than astonished at the procession that entered, and was not over pleased to have a wounded prisoner deposited with her while the Doctor examined his hurts and one of the detectives went for an auto to take him away.

I hurried Trix and Mary upstairs, to their great disappointment. But it was fully eight o'clock and high time for Trix to be in bed.

Presently Mary, who had been leaning over the banisters to get any information possible, joined me with the news that they were taking the Chinaman away.

"I think he is badly hurt," she added. "Oh, Mother, what will they do about my ring, do you suppose?"

"I don't know," I answered. "But I hope they'll bury it somewhere."

Pretty soon the Doctor reappeared.

"They are taking him to the hospital," he said. "But I doubt if it does much good. He is in a serious condition. It is curious to think of El Lobo and him in the same ward, maybe, with the two rings in their possession. No good luck came to either of them from wearing them."

"Daddy, it was my ring he was wearing, wasn't it? And where do you suppose El Lobo got the other one?"

"I am sure I don't know. But from what I can

gather from that detective, this Chinaman was head of some secret society. I imagine El Lobo aspired also and thought the ring would help his claim. Wing Wang didn't care for the idea of a rival, and having had his ring stolen in some way by El Lobo, he promptly stole yours. I think it had better stay with him and be buried, if necessary."

"Now, Daddy, that's just what Mother said. But I want my ring again."

"There looks to be small chance of your getting it, so you might as well give it up. And now to bed. We have had a long and exciting day. Let us hope that we may now settle down in peace."

Mary joined Trix, protesting that she was not at all tired, and the Doctor and I sat for a while in our room, in the darkness, looking out toward the ocean and the starlit sky and hearing the long slow sound of the waves breaking on the sand.

The next morning we found ourselves bright and early at the post office, where we mounted the stage. We had more room to spread ourselves out on the return trip, and to enjoy the wonderful country. There might be dozens of smugglers' caves along that sandy shore below us, with the great cliffs rising sheer above. And the rolling brown hills might shelter any number of bandits.

"It is no wonder that one meets with adventure in this wild, romantic country," said the Doctor. "But what a shame that they use motor cycles and aëroplanes instead of horses. I would like to gallop over these downs on John Ridd's great horse."

Mary asked the chauffeur whether there were any smugglers along the coast.

"There are more below on the Channel Islands," he answer. "Sometimes we get them here—a Jap or two may come in, or a gallon of whiskey. But they are not so plentiful. The revenue officers keep a pretty good lookout and the summer folks live on the beaches. Did you go around any here?"

"No, we just stayed on the beach," answered Mary.

"You should have had a drive. There are some wonderful trees and wooded hills back a bit. Not to mention the split in the ground made by the big earthquake."

"Did you feel it much here?" I questioned.

"Yes, indeed. As I just told you, it made a great cleft in the earth, a regular cañon. They are bad things, those earthquakes."

"Daddy, what are earthquakes? Do they eat you up?" asked Trix anxiously. "And will there be another one here?"

"I hope not, for some time to come," answered the chauffeur. "One was enough for me. But they aren't animals, kid, just big shakes of the ground, that make the houses tumble down."

"What makes the ground shake? How can it?"

"Well, I've had it explained to me, but I guess your Pa could tell you more about it."

"Tell me, Daddy," Trix repeated.

"Mary, could you explain to us?" asked her father.

"I don't know. I'll try. I remember reading a

lot about it in the 'Book of Knowledge.' Suppose, Trixy, that the earth was like an apple. If the inside of the apple changed or shrank or got smaller or anything, the outside skin would change. Maybe it would get wrinkles on it, like mountains, or hollows. So the inside of the earth changes and the surface or skin that we see changes with it. Sometimes it changes very slowly, and it takes hundreds of hundreds of years. But sometimes the outside changes quickly, all of a sudden, and the earth splits or sinks or is thrown up into a mountain. Then it's an earthquake. Parts of the crust are thinner than other parts, so that one is more likely to have earthquakes. They begin under the sea sometimes, too, don't they, Daddy?"

"Yes, and that causes what is called a tidal wave, when the sea rolls in on the land in a great wall of water. It does not occur very often where people can see it. Earthquakes are more usual in places where a strange thing known as a fault occurs. That's a queer name to give to ground. But do you remember the different layers of rock in the Grand Cañon, Mary, some of them red, some blue, some gray? Sometimes a layer, or stratum, will be found sloping or turned up on its side instead of lying flat. This happened long ago in an early part of the earth's history. It is called a 'fault,' and seems to be particularly good ground for earthquakes. There is a 'fault' somewhere in these parts which accounts for the shakings that have occurred. Earthquakes also like the neighborhood of volcanoes. Do you know what a volcano is, Mary?"

"Sure, Daddy."

"Well, what is it?"

"I know, but it's hard to explain. It's a hollow mountain with a hole in the top through which come explosions. I suppose the heat and the gases from the middle of the earth come out through them and bring fire and brimstone with them. And lava! Just what is lava?"

"Nothing but melted rock which flows out from the top or the fissures or cracks of the volcano. It flows down like a thick burning mass and finally cools off and gets solid again. Very unpleasant stuff when hot, I believe. Perhaps you may remember reading about the lava in Herculaneum and Pompeii, which were cities in Italy and destroyed a long time ago. Did you ever read 'The Last Days of Pompeii'?"

"Yes, I loved it. But it must have been awful to be there. I guess I'd rather read about volcanoes than live near one. At least unless it was one that didn't work any more!"

"I think I agree with you. Yet there are plenty of people who do live near them. I suppose they hope that the volcanoes have stopped going off. Italy has several. Tamalpais was one once. These towns around the bay here make me think of Italy and the Mediterranean.

"Here we are at Sausalito. I wonder how long we shall have to wait for the boat?"

"Not long, I reckon," the chauffeur said. "Just set on the dock for a while. I think I see her coming in. She's about off Alcatraz now."

We paid our driver and regretfully parted from

the stage; for we had enjoyed our trip from start to finish.

It was pleasant to watch the tame white gulls on the high posts of the dock or fishing in the blue water. Mary and Trix bought some ice-cream cones and sandwiches which we ate while awaiting the ferry.

"Mary will get back to school just in time for afternoon session," I said.

"Oh, dear! I wish I didn't have to! Can't we stay and go on board one of the warships? You promised we could, Daddy."

"I think we must put that off until some Saturday. I ought to get back myself to-day."

"But, Daddy, you said you would write to a surgeon you knew who could take us over one of the ships when it wasn't a holiday."

"I did write, but I haven't had any answer, which makes me think he isn't with the fleet."

"But, Daddy, there may be a letter waiting for you now at Mills. Won't you 'phone when we get back to San Francisco? I am sure Miss Vincent would look and see if there was any letter for you from Frisco."

"Suppose there were? I ought to get back, and so ought you."

"But just try."

"I can see no harm in that. I will 'phone Miss Vincent when we get over to San Francisco. But I won't make any further promises."

The trip across the bay was perfect. Never had the white building of the prison island looked so

dramatic against the blue of sea and sky. Never had the Golden Gate stood out so clearly, without trace of mist or cloud.

As we approached San Francisco and caught sight of the masts of the battleships and cruisers against the sky, Mary and Trix again begged to be allowed to visit them. But nothing further could be gained from the Doctor.

"Wait till we 'phone," was all the reply he would make.

It seemed a long time while the ferryboat was docking, and the 'phone booth sought and connections with Mills College established. Mary and Trix hung to the door handle and made their faces look as appealing as possible while the Doctor 'phoned. Finally he emerged.

"Nothing to-day," he said with a melancholy expression. "School for Mary, home for Mother and Trix, desk for me."

"Wasn't there any letter?" asked Mary.

"Well," answered her father as we walked briskly toward the Oakland ferry with its big yellow boats, "I didn't say that. In fact, I believe there is a letter."

"Oh, Daddy, you must tell us. What did it say?"

"I can't tell all that it said, but I believe it contains an invitation to lunch and to see a baseball game between the Navy and soldiers from the Presidio."

"Oh, Daddy, that's too wonderful! Is it for all of us?"

"Can I go? Can Dave go?" demanded Trix, dancing about excitedly.

"I wish we could get Dave. He has just been away for a week-end, though. But we'll do our best. Do you really think you would like to go, Trixy?"

Trixy waved her arms about wildly and beat with her little fists on her father's arms.

"Does that mean yes, or no?" he asked. "It might mean anything."

"Now, Daddy, of course she wants to go. Don't be horrid," said Mary. "Who is it who is asking us? Tell us all about him. Isn't it fine of him?"

"He was a surgeon on the transport that took me across during the war. And when I came back he happened to be on the same boat. Also I saw him over in France."

"Then you haven't known him long?" Mary asked.

"Men got to know each other quickly in those days. I know him well enough to admire him greatly. His name is Brewster, and he hails from New England, I believe."

"What does he look like?"

"Gracious, I don't know. Brown hair, two gray eyes, one nose, one mouth—"

"Now, Daddy! Is he tall or fat or handsome?"

"I rather think he's not very tall, shorter than I. Yes, I know he was shorter than I, because I tried to wear his coat one night. And his head is smaller than mine, because I couldn't get his cap on.

"He's a good sport all right. Our transport was

chased by a U-boat for over an hour one morning, and while most of us sat on deck trying to think of last words to say, Brewster took a bath. He said that if the boat went down he might as well go to heaven clean. If we escaped he needed a tub to begin the day right. So he got his tub, and an English stewardess served tea. They were wonderful, those two. I'll never forget that trim English woman with a life belt on, handing round the tray. I'd like to see her again. But Brewster's a good fellow. I'll be glad to see him. I'll be glad to see his letter."

Trix seized her father's hands and began to sing in a sort of chant, "I'll be glad, I'll be glad, I'll be glad, I'll be glad"—much to the amusement of the rest of the passengers.

We left Mary in front of the high school for her afternoon session.

"She seems rather pleased at going back to school," observed the Doctor. "I wonder how many times she will mention the trip to the ships and luncheon on board a real cruiser with real officers and a ball game afterward."

"It doesn't do any harm. Of course she'll enjoy telling it," I said.

"Surely. And when she comes home to-night, it will be the letter she will want first of all."

So it proved. Mary's first question was for the letter, and had we read and might she read it? She tried to snatch it from her father's hand, when he came home a little later, and became wildly indignant when he threatened to change his clothes for supper

before reading it aloud. But finally he capitulated, and sat down on the porch and took out his letter from Dr. Brewster from the envelope with great deliberation.

"DEAR DOC:

"Your letter was the best news I've had for a year of Sundays. I surely will be glad to see you and the Missus and the kids. Did you bring along the cat and the dog? I am not sure how many you said were in your party.

"There's going to be a ball game on Saturday next, sort of Thanksgiving celebration or other. Can't you all lunch with me here on the boat and then go over and cheer for the Navy? Of course if you insist on sitting with your old buddies on the khaki side, you're welcome. But I insist that the girls at least sit with me. Have you any boys along?

"Come early, as we shall have early mess that day, and the youngsters ought to see this old ship that has three U-boats to her credit. I'll expect five at least. I really mean it. I'll surely be awfully disappointed if you don't show up. Come to Dock No. 00 at 11:30 sharp, and one of our boys will be looking for you. Watch for the name *Resolute*.

"Yours disrespectfully,

"TOM BREWSTER."

"That certainly sounds as if he wanted us! Daddy, you'll cheer for the Navy, won't you? Oh, I just love blue jackets," said Mary enthusiastically.

"I guess we'll all cheer for the Navy," laughed the Doctor. "Brewster certainly is a brick."

CHAPTER XV

FROM THE SEQUOIAS TO THE "RESOLUTE"

DEAR Mother, and Daddy, and Mary and Trix," wrote Dave. "I am sending this to all of you. Because I haven't time to write to each one. We got back awfully late to school, not till Tuesday. So I can't come next Saturday to see the boats. Can't you go some other time? I do want to go on board one of them.

"I had a bully time with the Nortons. Only Mrs. Norton kept asking me if I wanted to go up in an aëroplane. It was so pretty in the park. The trees were so big! Some of them are over 250 feet tall and some of them are over 3000 years old. They were living before the flood I guess. One of them tumbled over a few years ago and we drove on it in our auto. Some people built a camp on it last summer. I felt as if I was in a big church in the grove. There were lots of birds and we saw some elk and other deer. We saw some bear tracks. It was awfully cold and there was hardly any one there. We spent one night camping and one of the rangers came and sat by our camp fire and told us lots of stories. There were some forest fires last summer and the campers helped put it out. He was awfully nice.

"I want to go camping there in summer and climb up Moro again. That's a big rocky mountain with a stairway 360 feet long going up it. It was awfully cold and slippery and icy, but such fun going up.

Mrs. Norton asked me if I didn't wish I had an aëroplane. Of course I did. I tell you we were tired when we got down. But you ought to have seen the view. Snow covered mountains all over. The Sierras they call them. Mount Whitney is the highest mountain in the United States except Alaska. It doesn't stand all alone like Blanca did in Colorado. There are lots of mountains and Whitney is the highest peak. I wanted to go to the top, but it was too late in the season.

"You all must go there sometime. Mother would just have fits. But those trees! Just think of driving a big auto along one just like a road. You ought to have seen it. Please send me a dollar. There's a boy here who has an old pistol he wants to sell for a dollar and I want it. Please send it quick.

"Your loving DAVE.

"P.S.—The Nortons send love. They want you to come down to the flower festival in the Christmas holidays. They say it's too cold to go to that other park unless you want to go for the winter sports."

We read this letter aloud on the Friday night before our visit to the fleet.

"Poor Dave," said Trix, "I wish he could go with us to-morrow."

"But what a great trip he must have had," said the Doctor. "Think of getting all those pages of writing out of Dave. I don't believe he ever wrote so much in his life. Here's another P.S.—'I am using most of this for English theme.' "

"I thought there was some reason for the length of it," I remarked. "How do you like the Nortons' suggestions of the Rose Festival in Pasadena for our last adventure here before going north?"

For we were to leave Mills after the first semester and were to motor up to Washington.

"Oh, Daddy, Winifred wants us to join a winter party to the Yosemite," said Mary. "There's going to be skiing and all sorts of fun. That would be lots nicer. It would be wonderful."

"Well, we won't decide it now. Perhaps we can split the party. I am sorry Dave cannot go with us to the ships. Perhaps he may have another chance to see them later. We can't have everything in this world," and with this bit of philosophy the Doctor got up and led the way to supper.

That evening the 'phone rang and Mary answered it, saying as she went, "I bet the ball game is put off and Dr. Brewster will tell us to come some other time."

The next moment she called, "Daddy, Daddy, some one wants to speak to you at a hospital. I can't make out just where."

The Doctor went to the 'phone and we could hear his side of the conversation.

"Hello,—"

"Yes,—"

"Yes,—"

"You mean on the 'phone?—"

"Do you mean that they want me to go over and see them to-night?—"

"Do you know what they want?—"

"About a ring? I've heard enough of rings!—"

"Dying rascals!—"

"Well, I'll try to stop in late to-morrow afternoon or Sunday. How do I get to your place?—"

"Were they moved there? I was afraid I would have to go to Sausalito. Then I think I can make it late to-morrow.—"

"It may be interesting, but I hope they have no knives concealed about their persons. One of them at least is right handy with a knife.—"

"Good-by.—"

"Oh, Daddy, what is it all about?" asked Mary. "It sounded very exciting."

"Our friends El Lobo and Wing Wang want to see me. Sort of dying confession or other. I don't want to go, but I don't like to refuse to go and see a dying patient, even if he is a rascal."

"You said something about my ring."

"I didn't. The other fellows did. If I ever get hold of it again, I shall drop it in San Francisco Bay. I'll stop off to-morrow on the way back from the ball game."

"Oh, Mother, isn't it wonderful to think that the game is to-morrow? And the stars are all out. I just looked a minute ago. It will be nice weather. And, oh, Mother, may I wear my white sailor dress?"

"That would seem to be suitable," I replied gravely.

"Do you want me to wear a sailor suit too?" asked her father.

"Wouldn't Dad look funny in a sailor suit!" laughed Trix, in great amusement.

"Don't you think it would be becoming, Trix?"

"Oh, Daddy, you're such a funny man."

"If I'm a funny man, you had better look out.

For funny men always carry little girls upstairs and throw them out of the window."

At this Trix gave a shriek of gleeful terror, and rushed out of the room, pursued by her father.

"That's a good way to get her upstairs to bed," observed Mary. "When do we start to-morrow?"

"We are to be at the dock at eleven-thirty, so I think we ought to leave the college here by ten o'clock. It's quite a bit of a walk to the fast trolley."

"It is going to be such fun. I expect the girls are all sick of the thought of it, I have talked so much about it the past week. I do wish Dave were coming. He'd love it."

The great Saturday dawned at last, "brite and fair," as a Real Boy was wont to say in his Real Diary.

While I was doing the week-end ordering, I could hear the wails and stamping of feet and protests that always accompany any special toilet efforts between Maria and Trix.

"Now, Trixy, vill you keep still? Maria vill not hurt you.—Maria must get the dirt from behint your ears, my darling.—Your hair vill not look pretty if Maria does not get out the snarls, my dearest."

Presently Mary appeared in her white sailor dress and soon after Trix came softly down the stairs, with a certain shyness that meant cleanliness accomplished and sorrows over.

"Where's Daddy? Isn't he here yet?" asked Mary.

"No, we are to pick him up at the college. Bless

your heart, it's only half past nine. We don't start till ten."

"But, Mother, you aren't going to wear that house dress?"

"I had not planned to," I replied. "Don't worry, I'll be ready."

"Don't you take any lunch mit you?" asked Maria, poking her head in at the door.

"Now, Maria, why should we when we are going to dine with real officers on a real boat!" answered Mary indignantly.

"Is dat so?" was Maria's response.

At last we were ready and off, and even the Doctor had been coaxed from his desk and we walked through the beautiful pines and eucalyptus trees of the college grounds. Here and there were great palms, or an old gnarled live oak, with its branches spreading about quaintly.

"It seems so strange to see all the palms growing. It is almost like the tropics," I said.

We were passing a beautiful formal garden with fine trees and plants.

"Can't we get some ice cream?" begged Trix as we approached the little store on a corner near the trolley crossing where Mills' students love to come for off-campus sweets.

"Indeed not," I replied. "It is too early in the morning."

"Beside we may be late," said Mary.

"Maria would have let me," remarked Trix sadly.

Finally we reached the trolley and then the ferry, which seemed to Mary and Trix to take an endless

time crossing the bay. But there was some comfort in gazing at the distant fleet which we were about to visit, and being sure that it was still there, in the blue water, to be visited.

On Dock OO we found a spruce young naval officer who saluted and made friends at once.

"My name is Raymond, sir. Dr. Brewster sent me for your party, sir."

Alongside the dock was a ship's boat with four sailors, their oars standing straight up in the air in honor of our appearance. Swiftly we were transported to the destroyer *Resolute,* where willing hands assisted us to the deck.

There Dr. Brewster, a fine-looking, dark-haired man of about forty, bade us welcome, and shook hands with each in turn.

"Where's the boy, where's Dave?" he asked.

"Dave couldn't come," answered the Doctor. "He had a long week-end holiday last week, and this Saturday had to stay at the school."

"That's too bad. Now, who wants to go down, way down, below in the ship and who wants to wander over the decks? It will probably be pretty oily and messy down where the engines are."

"I want to go down," said Trix promptly.

"May we, Mother?" asked Mary.

"Of course you may," Dr. Brewster replied. "But suppose we old folks stay on deck. Mr. Raymond will take you down and answer all your questions. He knows a lot more about that part than I do."

So after we had gone over the deck and had

climbed the conning tower and had the great guns revolved about for our benefit, the ensign took Mary and Trix below while Dr. Brewster showed us his own pleasant cabin.

"It's great to see you again, Doc," he said, as we sat at peace, while the men smoked. "What brings you here to the coast? I didn't know anything would tempt you from New England. Thought I remembered your saying something like that the last time I saw you."

The Doctor laughed. "Why, we came here for business, sightseeing, and peace, and we've run into a regular moving picture series of adventures."

"Gracious, what's happened?"

The Doctor proceeded to tell about Mary's finding the ring in New Mexico and losing it; how she recovered it from the apparently dying half-breed; how it was stolen by the Chinese, Wing Wang; our adventures with the smugglers on the Channel Islands; and finally of our trip to Bolinas and the telephone message of the night before.

"No wonder the movie people all come to California," so ended the Doctor, "it seems to be in the air."

"Maybe you brought it with you, Doc," said Brewster. "I remember you were always running into things abroad. Did you ever tell your wife how we went out in the lorry and suddenly found ourselves on a road marked Strassburg and heading straight for it? But really, now, you spin a good yarn. I am glad for your sakes those two fellows are about to leave California for good. Those

Chinese secret societies are nasty things to run up against. I wonder what they want of you. Be sure you keep at a distance, for they are handy with a knife at all times. I've seen quite a lot of those fellows here and in China. The high caste are wonderful. They can put it all over a European for manners and persistence. I've sworn a dozen times I wouldn't give some old Chinaman what he wanted, no matter how polite he was, and suddenly I'd find I'd done it and was thanking him for the chance!

"They usually have a suave mandarin in the consular offices to do Chinese work for us. If the Consul isn't a strong character the Chinaman will own the place before a month is out. It seems as though they hypnotized us. And persistent! I've known a fellow who didn't look as if he had strength enough to smoke his opium pipe come in day after day to ask a favor that had been refused each time. And by Jove! in the end he always wins out."

"Do you know anything about the secret society we have apparently run into?" I asked.

"I've heard of it, I think. But Captain Donald knows more about it. He's quite an authority on Chinese intrigues. We'll ask him at mess. But do you know, I've a great admiration for these orientals. I know I'll never understand 'em, but the low castes make wonderful servants and the high castes make wonderful acquaintances.

"Look here, Doc, do you remember that colored M. P. trying to run traffic regulations in a French town? I don't know what made me think of him just then. He was as big as the giant in Barnum's

circus and he was having a lovely time trying to make the French peasant obey the traffic rules. It was a great sight."

"Yes, and do you remember the colored sergeant who said, 'I ain't goin' back ovah no ocean, boss, I'se goin' home by New Orleans!' "

So the two men talked over their experiences of the great war, and I listened with a thankful heart to think that it was over.

We were interrupted by Trix's shrill little voice calling, "Mother, Daddy," and Ensign Raymond appeared with Mary and Trix.

"It was great, Daddy, you ought to have come," said Mary. "We went way down the funniest little ladder and we heard all about everything. Mr. Raymond told us how they sunk the three U-boats."

"And we saw the sailors' hammocks and a goat," chimed in Trix. "It's their maxgoat."

"What?" demanded Dr. Brewster.

Trix immediately became shy and hid behind me.

"It was a maxgoat," she murmured.

"I think she means mascot," I interpreted.

"Yes, that's what I mean. Anyway, he was a nice goat. And there's rabbits, too, and a cat."

"They've been all over with us," said Dr. Brewster. "The cat came from England and the goat and the rabbits from France. Well, let's go down to mess, for I hear eight bells and we want to be prompt."

It was pleasant sitting at the captain's table, although the dining cabin was very small compared to the saloon of a great ocean liner.

Dr. Brewster immediately made the Doctor tell his story over again. When he came to the part about the smugglers in the Channel Islands, Captain Donald, a red-haired Scotchman, interrupted.

"I heard about those fellows. They were caught, too, and that New England captain got off because nothing could actually be proved against him. The revenue men had an exciting chase before they caught the big boat. They found some of the injured man's property on board. But that would not have been enough evidence, had not the revenue officer recovered, thanks to you, Doctor, doubtless, and given his testimony with great enthusiasm. There was a lot of liquor on board, too, and there was a fine bit of a scrap before the capture was made. Those smugglers are tough customers."

"But look here, Captain," said Dr. Brewster, "we want you to tell us about the secret ring and the secret societies."

"And I want the Doctor to finish his story. My interruption was only in the way of a parenthesis," answered Captain Donald.

When the Doctor had told of all our adventures, he asked the captain if he knew anything more about the secret society and the ring.

"It is a very interesting society," said the captain. "It was started many centuries ago to preserve the liberties of China both against foreign enemies and tyrants at home. It took in peasant and mandarin. There were always to be two leaders, one low caste and the other high. They each wore a ring to signify their leadership. They look to a republic or a com-

plete democracy, where all shall be equal. They symbolized their purpose in rather a beautiful old story. It was told to me in Pekin once, just after the Boxer rebellion, by a fine old mandarin clad in the most beautiful silk coat I have ever seen.

"The legend runs that a peasant boy, who was tender hearted for the weak ones of the earth, once rescued a bluebird. The bird in gratitude brought him a strange ring with a jade dragon on it. The boy did not know what the meaning of it was, but kept it carefully. When he was grown he heard one day that the beautiful daughter of the Emperor could not move her hands, but always kept them clasped together, thus signifying, the mandarin told me, how the rich and powerful keep their wealth for themselves. The Emperor announced that he would give half his kingdom and the hand of the Princess beside to any one who could cure the Princess. The peasant had seen her afar off one day, and had thought her so bonnie that he wished he could help her.

"So he went to the palace, taking with him the ring that the bird had long ago given him, hoping it might be of use. Sure enough, when he slipped his ring on her finger, she opened her hands with a glad laugh, and there was another ring, just like the one the bird had brought.

"Thus peasant and princess were united and the two rings typified the union. But long ago one ring disappeared; legends have it that it was carried to a far country. When the two rings shall come together, then a new free day will dawn for China.

Such was the story told me in far more beautiful words than I can give it with my broad Scotch tongue."

"Is it possible," asked Dr. Brewster, "that Mary here may have found the other ring? I can hardly believe it."

"Evidently the Chinese believe it! I think you have seen the last of your ring, my dear," he added, turning to Mary. "But I will certainly be glad to hear what your two men have to say to you to-night. Will you let me know?"

"I will indeed. That is a most interesting yarn. I certainly hope that poor old China may be indeed entering on a time of happiness," said the Doctor.

"And now we ought to be off, if we want to see the ball game," said Dr. Brewster. "You young folks ought to have something to represent the Navy. I'll get Raymond to bring you some hatbands with *Resolute* on them, and maybe a button or two. For we're all loyal tars to-day!"

CHAPTER XVI

NAVY VERSUS ARMY—THE LAST OF THE RING

ALL San Francisco and also the suburban towns seemed to be on the way to the baseball field. Dr. Brewster had an automobile waiting so that it was not necessary to get into a crowded trolley car.

"It seems funny to be going to a baseball game in November," said Mary. "They would be playing football at home."

"It is warm enough here for baseball," answered Dr. Brewster, "and the Navy boys prefer the national game. They are pretty good at it, too."

"I am glad it isn't football," I observed. "I feel as though I knew at least the A, B, C's of baseball, but football is quite beyond me."

"The Navy has a good team, I think, but the Army boys are always stiff opponents. They had lots of practice throwing in the World War, eh, Doc?"

"They did indeed. We used to learn that the battle of Waterloo was won on the cricket fields of Eton! I am sure that bat, ball, and diamond gave us our victories in Flanders and Lorraine."

"I can throw a ball," said Trixie.

"Of course you can," was Dr. Brewster's reply. "I'd be ashamed of any American boy or girl who couldn't."

Presently our automobile fell into a great procession of vehicles, and we slowly proceeded to the ball field.

A part of the grand stand was reserved for the Navy sympathizers, and here we found our seats directly behind the wire screen with home plate right in front of us. The grand stand was full of officers in uniform, with their friends and relatives, the blues on the left, the khaki on the right, while in the bleachers were crowded all sorts of baseball fans—bluejackets, doughboys, and citizens of California.

It was a perfect day, the kind known as Indian summer in New England. Dr. Brewster pointed out to us various celebrities, the commander of the Presidio fort, the visiting generals. He seemed to know them all by name and reputation.

"That young fellow over there was on a mine sweeper, Mary. That's a mighty dangerous occupation. Twice his boat was the only survivor of a little fleet. The rest were blown to kingdom come without warning.

"That youngster over there was one of the fellows who went into Zeebrugge with an English boat when they sunk one of their own ships in the mouth of the harbor and bottled up the German Fleet."

"They look so young," I said. "I have often heard it called a young man's war."

"Humph, Foch wasn't so young, or Hindenburg or Pershing. But look, here comes the team. There goes the Admiral to throw the first ball. Here's your score card, Mary, with the names of the players written in. Ensign Raymond did that for you."

A great shout greeted the teams as they ran out and took their places on the field. A few balls were thrown about for practice, and then came the cry of the umpire, "Play ball," and the game began in earnest, with the Army at bat.

"That fellow throws a pretty ball," remarked the Doctor as two khaki boys struck out.

The third man made a two-base hit, but was left there when the fourth doughboy hit an easy one right into the hands of the first baseman. In the second half of the inning the Navy catcher made a three-base hit and then came home when his successor sent a swift grounder between first and second base. Then came three or four dull innings, a pitcher's game, the Doctor called it. No runs were made on either side, and at the end of the seventh inning the score stood one to nothing in favor of the Navy.

"This is pretty stupid," remarked Dr. Brewster. "Let's have some ginger ale and ice-cream cones. Maybe that will change the current."

"It seems to me that you must have spent all your money already on peanuts, Brewster," said the Doctor severely.

Ensign Raymond joined us at this time, declaring that every one was asleep on the bleachers.

"Can't we wake 'em up some here, Sir?" he wanted to know.

The first Army man to come to bat in the eighth inning hit a remarkably swift ball right toward the pitcher, who tried to catch it. He did stop it, but dropped it immediately and sat down on the ground.

He was up in a moment and tried to throw the ball to second, but it went wild. The shortstop got it, however, and the runner remained on first. Then time was called. The pitcher had hurt his hand. A man with a black bag rushed out, made a brief examination, and then ordered the player off the field, as he had a sprained wrist.

"That's pretty bad for us, Sir," Raymond said. "We have no other pitcher. They will have to put in Atkins, and he's not good at all."

The ensign's prophecy proved true. Atkins allowed three runs to fall to the Army before the end of the inning.

The Navy crowd then woke up and began a wonderful series of calls and shrieks and whistles, supposed to strike terror into their opponents and to hearten their own side.

The net result was one run. At the beginning of the ninth inning the score was three to two in favor of the Army.

"Oh, this is awful," said Raymond. "With Atkins pitching they'll run up a tremendous score. They may make it a hundred."

"Not quite as many as that," laughed Dr. Brewster. "But it surely looks bad."

The gloomy fears of Ensign Raymond seemed about to be fulfilled. The first batter got to third on a long swift one which was luckily stopped by the right fielder in time to prevent a home run. The second man bunted an easy one that took him to first, but quick work by the catcher prevented the doughboy on third from getting home. The third man

took his base on balls, and number two moved on to second.

"Jumping Jehosophat! All the bases full and that fool in the pitcher's box," ejaculated Dr. Brewster. "Nothing but a miracle can save us."

A great, tall negro came to the bat, with a grin on his face that seemed to breathe out self-confidence. He evidently scorned the pitcher utterly.

"One strike," called the umpire.

People sat up.

"One ball."

The Navy groaned.

"Two balls."

The Navy shrieked.

"Three balls."

"Nothing can save us now," said Raymond.

The colored soldier waved his bat derisively, and held it back over his shoulder. The men on bases took long leads and prepared to move on as the ball left the pitcher's nervous hands. It came wildly careering through the air.

"It will be four balls and take your base and another run," groaned Ensign Raymond.

Evidently the runners thought so, too, and the batter also. He started to toss his bat preparatory to leaving for first and lo! the miracle that Dr. Brewster had wished for happened. Somehow the ball and bat collided in mid-air and the ball rolled back into the diamond. Before the astonished colored soldier could recover from his surprise, the catcher darted forward and touched him.

Every one in the crowded grand stand and bleach-

ers rose to their feet. Words of advice were shrieked on all sides:

"Throw it to third."

"Put him out."

"Out on second."

"Hold it."

"Hold it."

"Don't run."

The catcher was a quick-witted fellow. In an instant he had thrown to second base, to which the runner tried in vain to return.

"Double play"—howled the Navy.

Meanwhile the man who had left third came on toward home.

"Beat it, beat it!" yelled the Army.

"Home, home!" cried everybody.

Without an instant's hesitation the second baseman threw home, a straight swift ball, and just as the runner slid in, the catcher touched him with the ball while his outstretched fingers were three inches from the plate.

"By Jove, a triple play and side out," exclaimed the Doctor. "I never saw a prettier bit of baseball."

The hats of the Navy rose in the air and the air was rent with cheers.

"What's the matter with the catcher? He's all right."

"What's the matter with the Navy? It's all right."

"What's the matter with the Army?"

"B-o-o-o-o."

"Cricky, they're still a run ahead!" exclaimed Mary.

"Oh, but we'll beat 'em now," said Dr. Brewster. "Here, Raymond, go down and tell the boys they have got to win."

The catcher, Sanford, was the first to bat. He was thrilled with his own great play of the previous half inning and the cheering of the crowd. His bat met the ball with a sharp crack and he ended on third base.

The Navy band struck up a rollicking tune.

"They've bunched the good batters," remarked Dr. Brewster. "That fellow at the bat is good for a two-bagger usually."

Again the bat went crack! against the ball, and it traveled, a swift grounder, straight out into the field, bringing Sanford home and putting the batter at second.

"No outs, one run, and a man on second. There's a great chance," the Doctor said. "But look here, Brewster, how about that triple play? Was that a fair ball?"

"Sure. They'll quarrel over it a bit, but I heard another umpire make a similar decision once before. If the bat hits the ball into the diamond, it's good. There's no getting around that."

Dead silence now reigned over the field. The score was a tie. Could the Navy make another run?

"Here comes that awful pitcher," said Mary. "He's so clumsy he'll never do anything."

But apparently clumsiness has its uses, for the bat-

ter got hit by a pitched ball and went to first, while the man on second stole to third.

The next batter was struck out; so was the next.

The audience leaned forward in their seats and men leaned over each other's shoulders in breathless excitement.

"One strike," called the umpire.

No one stirred.

"One ball."

The Navy let out a deep breath.

The man on first stole to second, but no one paid much attention to him.

"He can run, though, even if he can't pitch," I thought to myself.

Crack! the bat swung and hit the swift-coming ball straight and true. It sped through the pitcher and the place where the second baseman ought to have been and hit the ground just before it reached center field. It bounded up over the outstretched hand of that worthy and rolled on, pursued by both the left and right fielders.

Amid wild cheers from the Navy, the man on third came in and the man on second came in and then nobody cared what happened, while the crowd rushed into the field and seized the last batter and bore him in triumph on their shoulders.

"Aren't they going to finish?" Mary asked.

"No, when the batters are ahead they never finish the last half of the ninth," Dr. Brewster answered. "It isn't etiquette. 'Jove, Doc, that was some game. I'm glad we came, after all. Just see how fast the crowd melts away."

"And to think that the stupid pitcher actually made one of the winning runs," said Mary. "I'm sort of glad he did. He might have felt too bad."

We went back to the ferry landing with Dr. Brewster in a taxi.

"By the way, will you drop me at that hospital on the way?" said the Doctor. "I promised to stop and see those two fellows, you know."

"That's right. The game made me forget it."

So we dropped the Doctor and proceeded on our way. The taxi landed us at the ferry before the crowd, and Dr. Brewster saw us aboard.

"You are surely all right?" he asked. "Got enough money to get home and all that?"

We laughed and thanked him.

"I forgot to say good-by to Mr. Raymond," said Mary. "Will you do it for me, Dr. Brewster?"

"I surely will, Mary. You must all come to see us again, and bring the boy next time!"

So we all shook hands and we got on the ferry.

"To think that we were really on that grim-looking, gray destroyer," I said as we got our last look at the *Resolute*. "Trix, did you have a good time, and what did you like best?"

Trix, dirty and tired, and eating an ice-cream cone which Dr. Brewster had given her on parting, replied: "I liked the rabbits and the goat and Mr. Raymond."

"Oh, but it was wonderful, Mother," Mary said, as she leaned over the rail of the boat and looked across the water at the city, so enchanting in the

dusk of a late November afternoon. "The boat and the sailors and the game. Mr. Raymond certainly was nice. I'm going to keep the score card he made for me. I love the hatband, too, and don't you think I could have the button made into a hatpin? He said they were going to sail pretty soon for the winter maneuvers. But maybe they'll come to the East some time. He's promised to send me some picture postal cards. Do you mind, Mother?"

"Mercy, no."

"How old do you think he is, Mother?"

"How old does he think you are?" I answered.

Mary laughed. "He said seventeen, but he may have been joking. There was a Jackie playing on an accordion in the stern and we had a dance. He's twenty."

"That isn't so very old," I answered; and presently we reached the other side.

"I wonder how your father is getting along," I said as we sat in the trolley, homeward bound.

"That's right, I forgot about Daddy. I wonder if he will get my ring back," Mary said.

It was a couple of hours later, when Trix was in bed and Mary was coaxing to be allowed to stay up, that the Doctor arrived. He was hungry and tired, but as he sat by the dining table, waited on by Maria and myself, while Mary hovered about, he drew from his pocket a fine silk scarf. Wrapped in it were two rings almost exactly alike, silver, with the jade dragon and the sign of good luck on the back.

"Daddy, how did you get them?" Mary cried.

"It's quite a story," answered her father. "Let me eat first and then I will tell you."

"Dot iss right. Let him eat first," observed Maria. "The poor man is tired und hongry," and she brought him a plate heaped as for a grenadier.

"Maria, you ought to have married," said the Doctor. "You know how to take care of a man."

"Ach, Doctor, maybe I vill yet," answered Maria. "I am not so olt. But I think I'll yust take care of the bonies. They cannot talk so much back to me and he might not like me to sink. My bonies they like to hear me sink."

Supper being eaten, the Doctor got into a comfortable chair, lit his pipe, and began his story.

"That Wing Wang is surely a remarkable man. I think he must have hypnotized me as Dr. Brewster said they all did. From the minute I went into his tiny room and looked into his pinched yellow face, I felt somehow as though I were helpless, in the clutch of a stronger will than mine. He spoke excellent English, but very slowly, as though carefully choosing his words. He told me something of the story that Captain Donald did,—how the two rings signified the meeting of high and low in China, and freedom for the people.

" 'I cannot live,' he said. 'You who are a physician must know this. And if I should live, your laws would condemn me to death or imprisonment. They will not let me see my friends. But I ask you as the last request of a man who is about to die, as you call it, to take a small parcel for me and put it into the hands of a Chinaman named Wu Fang who

works in Los Angeles, for your friends Mr. and Mrs. Norton.'

"I asked what the package contained. He replied that I knew already. But he drew from some place of concealment a ball of silk thread. This he bade me unwind. In the center were the two rings. I was startled to see them both.

" 'How did you get the second one—from El Lobo?' I asked.

"He grinned. 'He whom you call El Lobo is dead. The ring was mine; now it is again in the hands of its owner.'

"That was all he would tell me on that subject. He continued, however, to speak of El Lobo. 'He was of the lowest caste, a half-breed. He wished to be a leader. But I, I come of a great family. I would have been the head of all and with these two rings might have brought prosperity to my country. But others will do it. Only the rings must not fall into the hands of those who would betray their country. Promise me that you will take the rings to Wu Fang.'

" 'Look here,' I said, 'I don't want to have anything to do with the rings or your society. I'll get a knife in my back for my pains. And one of those rings was found by my daughter. It is an Indian ring.'

"Then he told me how long ago a prince had wandered away with his followers, fleeing from invading foreigners, and had carried the ring across the waters to a new country. 'The Indians, as you call them, were once like my people,' he added.

'Your daughter cannot keep the ring, it would bring her to great danger. But I will send word with the rings to Wu Fang to give your little daughter a costly gift, far more beautiful than the ring.'

"Well, the long and short of it was that he finally persuaded me against my better judgment to undertake the charge. Only I stipulated that I should give them to some trusty messenger in Oakland, and not have to keep them about my person till some chance came to go to Los Angeles. So we compromised on old Chang here, the head chef at the college. Of course I swore secrecy, and indeed it wasn't necessary. No word of this must get around. I suppose I may have been followed back home by any number of spies. I have sent for Chang. Heaven help him when he gets these precious rings!"

"Oh, Daddy, I hate to give up my ring! But I wonder what they will give me, in return. It's awfully exciting."

At that moment the door of the room, which was also the door of the house, opened noiselessly, and the face of a Chinaman looked in. We all jumped as if we had seen a ghost. But it was only Chang, the old head cook, who had been summoned and doubtless knew why. He did not seem any too anxious to undertake the charge.

He laid the scarf on the table and remarked "Burn him." Then he drew out of his pocket some ripe figs. He cut a segment out of two of them, pressed a ring into the soft pulp, and then somehow replaced part of the segments so that the figs looked

natural, though a little soiled. He replaced them in his pocket.

"Wing Wang him dead. Good-by. Talk no good."

With this parting word, he went out, as noiselessly as he had come.

"That's what you might call sudden," I said.

"I'll never see my ring again. May I keep the scarf, Daddy?" asked Mary.

"Chang said 'burn him,' and burn it I will," replied the Doctor.

So we wrapped the beautiful silken thing in a newspaper and burned it in the fireplace.

"I hope the prosaic modern newspaper will destroy the ancient magic of the scarf," said the Doctor as the whole vanished in flames up the chimney.

"May we never hear anything more of ring or society."

"How did El Lobo die, Daddy?" Mary asked.

"They told me at the hospital that he was poisoned—they could not imagine how. And how that fellow Wing Wang, with his smashed body, managed it I can't tell you myself. Any more than I can tell you why I promised to do his will. I believe he must have been a remarkable man. They will probably find him dead of the same poison some fine morning.

"Now good night all. It's late, and we have had a long day. Mary is yawning her head off."

"I am not sleepy a bit," said Mary indignantly; but a long yawn interrupted her denial.

"It has been a great day. But I wish Dave could

have seen that game. I don't think I will ever forget it."

"I am sorry to have to say good-by to my ring," was Mary's remark as she went upstairs. "But, Mother, do you think I'll ever hear from Ensign Raymond?"

CHAPTER XVII

MOVIES AND AN AËROPLANE IN LOS ANGELES

CHRISTMAS in California! It seemed so strange to hear the bells ringing from the old mission churches and receive a large bouquet of roses instead of holly wreaths. We expected to stay quietly at Mills College during the first part of the holidays at any rate. But the Nortons persuaded us to come and have our Christmas in Los Angeles.

Mary and her father were to leave next day for winter sports in the Yosemite Park. They were to meet Winifred Ransome and a dozen girls at a certain little branch station of the railroad, and then go on together, while Dave, Trix, and I stayed for the week with the Nortons, to be present on New Year's Day at the famous Carnival of Roses at Pasadena.

Dave was greatly disappointed that he, too, could not join the Yosemite party. But as the others were all much older, it seemed best for him to remain with me.

On Christmas Eve we drove about the city to see the gardens, which were full of wonderful flowers, and then we visited the orange groves. It did not seem at all like the twenty-fourth of December. I think we missed the snow of a New England Christmas.

Dave remarked, "This seems like the description of heaven in the Bible, but, Mother, I'd sort of get tired of it forever. Won't there be some snow in heaven, don't you think?"

That evening there was to be a revival of a Spanish miracle play in the old Pueblo church, the church of "Nuestra Señora, Renia de los Angeles."

"They used to do this every Christmas in some church or mission," Mr. Norton told us, "in the days when the padres were supreme."

It was lovely in the church, where there can still be seen the crude frescoes done by the Indians. Before the quaint altar sat a saintly looking young virgin with a real little baby in her arms. The organ played soft music which must have soothed the infant, for he behaved beautifully. The church lights were dimmed except those nearest the group, which threw a sort of halo on the mother and child. Then some nice shaggy old shepherds came to chant their praises. These were followed by a hermit and a soldier, who sat and played at dice instead of worshiping, while a very devilish fiend waited to seize their souls.

Fortunately a handsome St. Michael in full armor interfered at the right moment. He drove away the fiend and led the two sinners to the Holy Child, where all knelt in prayer and penitence, and a choir of angels sang the Gloria with most heavenly voices.

Even Trix was full of enthusiasm. She wished they would sing again. She wanted them to do it all again. She wished she could stroke the babe.

She had been particularly pleased when the fiend made faces at her.

"I don't believe he did it at her," said Mary sceptically.

"But he did, Mother, didn't he?" Trix assured us.

We drove home through the starlit night, the air soft as summer and full of the fragrance of blossoms.

The day after Christmas Mary and her father left us early for their trip to the snow. They wore their riding things and had borrowed everything warm that could be had. They carried skiis and snowshoes and were assured that sleds and toboggans could be hired at the park itself.

Dave had been very good about staying at home, but when the time actually came he was silent and noticeably depressed.

"Dave," remarked Mrs. Norton as we drove back from the station, "Mr. Norton and I didn't give you any real Christmas present. We had a notion that maybe you'd like something a little different. A friend of ours is going to take a little flight down south to-day, and we persuaded him to take a passenger. How would you like that for a Christmas surprise?"

There was an instantaneous change from the listless boy of a moment before.

"Oh, Mrs. Norton! Mother, may I?"

"Of course you may," Mrs. Norton said. "Your mother would never have the heart to refuse. And I got your father's consent before he left."

"Then there is nothing left for me to say," I remarked.

"Let us proceed at once to the field of honor," said Mr. Norton.

We drove out through the city to the aëro field, where we saw a number of planes out practicing and heard the buzzing of the great machines. Dave's face was red with excitement, and he could hardly keep in the auto.

"Can't I go, too?" begged Trix. "I know you won't let me."

"You are quite right," I replied. "Dave is much older than you. You will have to wait for a few years."

Finally we arrived at the hangar of Mr. Norton's friend, and found the man in question standing beside his machine. Mrs. Norton introduced us.

"Jackson is a good, safe driver," I was assured.

Indeed Mr. Jackson looked it. He was a man under thirty, with a lean strong face, and steady gray eyes.

"This is my one son, Mr. Jackson," was my only remark.

"And she prefers him as he is, without any blemishes," added Mrs. Norton. "Dave has been pestering the life out of us about aëroplanes. Give him a dose, but don't do any stunts."

"I never do, with passengers," was the reply.

Then Dave was swathed in sweaters and rugs.

"Good-by, Mother," he called, after he had given me a good hug. Then he got into the machine, and Mr. Jackson followed.

The machinist shoved the great aëroplane, and

presently with whirring propeller, the creature started, faster and faster, until it rose in the air.

Dave was a dot in the distance.

"Well, we might as well take a drive, for Jackson will be gone for a couple of hours," said Mrs. Norton. "He has to run down, or fly down, to Palm Springs."

"But that is miles away, isn't it? It sounds as if it were."

"It's only about one hundred and twenty miles. That's nothing in a plane," Mr. Norton answered.

"It seems quite far to a staid old New Englander," I said.

"How would you like to run over to Hollywood, where they take a lot of the movies?" Mrs. Norton suggested.

Trix exclaimed with pleasure, so we started off, while I hastened to explain that Trix had only witnessed half a dozen movie shows in her life.

"Of course she's much too young," I added. "Even the special children's performances don't really amuse her as much as she thinks they will. I wish they had more films with just fairy stories or nature pictures, the way they do in Germany, I am told."

"We may come to it some day," said Mrs. Norton.

We found the big studios and scenes most interesting, and had our pictures taken on the spot that was usually occupied by Tom Mix and his circus parties.

"Mary ought to be here," said Mrs. Norton. "I'll wager she loves the movies."

"I can't deny it," was my answer.

They happened to be staging a comedy with the usual exciting scenes, people falling out of windows and landing in pools of water, china flung about recklessly, and finally a real pig was introduced, which pleased Trix greatly.

They took six reels of two small children in the process of dressing. The youngsters were about two years old, and were extremely funny as they played and put on their clothes alternately. Occasionally one of them would lose his balance over a button and tumble down. This worried Trix, and suddenly, before I could stop her, she ran onto the stage and tried to help the little boy to button his shoe.

I was filled with consternation, and called to Trix to come back instantly, which she did. We apologized to the manager, a big, genial Irishman.

"It was a bit unexpected loik," was his comment. "But she's got a real Irish head of hair on her, and she will just add a touch to the picture."

"Do you mean I'm in the picture?" gasped Trix.

"Bedad, yes," was the answer. "And a foin actress you'll be. You'll be sure to see the film when it comes on the stage, young lady."

Then he gravely shook hands with Trix, leaving us rather breathless.

"You certainly are up to everything, Trix," said Mrs. Norton. "I should think your mother's eyes would be worn out looking after you and her slipper in frazzles from spanking you!"

"I didn't mean to do anything naughty, Mother," pleaded Trix. "I just wanted to help the little boy."

"And quite right, too," said Mrs. Norton. "He looked like a stupid child, who couldn't dress himself properly without tumbling all over himself."

"May I go and see it, Mother?" asked Trix. "Will I really be in the picture?"

"You will indeed. Let us not tell your father, and take him to see it some time. Wouldn't it be a lark? But I don't believe that either of us could keep the secret from him as long as that."

Up in the hills was an open air theater where many performances are given each year of the Pilgrimage Play, scenes from the Life of Christ.

"Thousands come to see it," Mr. Norton told us. "I wish you had been able to go when you were here in September. It really is most impressive and beautiful."

After a while we drove leisurely back to get Dave. But we had to wait for some time before he returned, and meanwhile Trix and Mr. Norton went into several hangars and she climbed into a stationary aëroplane, saying that it was almost as much as Dave had done.

At last came the whirring sound overhead, and presently the huge birdlike creature slowly descended and brought back to earth a much excited boy. He found it a little hard to get his balance on the solid earth, but his tongue seemed to have been wound up by the rapid motion.

"Mother, it was wonderful. I wasn't scared, was I, Mr. Jackson? Only just at first. I felt sort of seasick, like going upside down in a hammock. But I loved it. I'm going to have one some day. Mr.

Jackson told me how to work 'em. Mother, it was great at Palm Springs. They were making some pictures of desert scenes, you know, for the movies. They had a charge of Arabs on camels that was great. Only they went sort of slow. I guess they'll run it through quicker. There were lots of cactuses there. And we saw orange groves, millions of them, and walnut trees on the way. And we saw the snow peaks and the ocean on the other side." Dave paused for breath.

"I was taken in a movie picture," said Trix calmly.

"Aw, now, Mother, that isn't true," commented Dave.

"Yes, it is true. But Trix, I thought we were going to keep it a secret. How did the earth look, Dave, from an aëroplane? How did you feel?"

"It looked like it does from the top of a big high mountain, only it wobbled. It seemed to sort of move up and down, as it does when you're seasick. It was cold, too, and the sun was bright enough to hurt your eyes. We went so fast, Mother. It was bully. Trains and autos will seem awful slow."

"Did he behave all right, Jackson?" asked Mr. Norton.

"Did he want to run it for you?" demanded Mrs. Norton.

The aviator laughed. "Dave's all right," he replied. "He's going again with me some time. He'll make an airman if he works hard enough. He seems to have a natural taste for machinery and going fast."

"It certainly was good of you to take him. I can't

thank you enough for giving him so much pleasure," I said. "Have you thanked Mr. Jackson, Dave?"

"He surely did. It was just a pleasure anyway, and no trouble, as I was out on business."

We shook hands, and then Dave got into the auto, with evident reluctance. He hated to leave the aëroplane.

"Hurry up, Dave, you can't take it with you," laughed Mrs. Norton. "Bless the boy, he's insatiable."

We received several postals from Mary and her father. They were having a perfect time, they wrote.

"Yesterday several feet of snow fell," the Doctor's card said. "It's funny not to measure by inches. Dave would be satisfied."

"I am," observed Dave, who was curled up in a chair on the porch reading "The Aëro Service in the Great War."

"You ought to see the snow men we built," came on a postal from Mary. "We sat them on sleds and pulled them around. There are some real artists at it here. My, it's cold, though."

Dave sipped luxuriously at a long glass of grape juice and smiled in a superior fashion.

"We climbed into a crevasse," wrote the Doctor on their next to last day. "It was very narrow and slippery, and we could hardly get through. It was pretty exciting because a fall would be fatal. The blue-green ice cave, like water solidified, is marvelous. Tell Trix we had a great snowball fight yesterday. Ten against ten and no quarter given.

Several got their faces well rubbed into the soft snow."

"It doesn't seem possible that they are only eight or ten hours away," I said. "With these lovely flowers here."

"We get snow and ice sports much nearer than that," answered Mrs. Norton. "Just a two hours' ride up into the mountains close beside us! A party went up yesterday for a night's sport. But of course you don't have the wonderful scenery here. I don't think there is anything to compare with the Yosemite in winter, or summer either for that matter. You have the Grand Cañon and Niagara Falls and Switzerland all combined, and the great trees thrown in for good luck. At one big camp, they always light a bonfire and drop it from the immense height of Glacier Point just before retiring, which means 'lights out.' I wonder if your people will see bears. They used to be quite tame."

Her question was answered by Mary's last letter.

"I haven't time to write, but I must tell Trix about the bears. We were hanging around the kitchen early in the morning, having had a sunrise party up the valley. There was a smell of bacon cooking and it certainly smelled good! All of a sudden I looked around, thinking I heard footsteps, and there was a great huge bear. I yelled and rushed toward the house. A man poked his head out of the door and called to me, 'Don't scare that bear, little girl. He comes for his breakfast every morning afore you're up!"

"The bear went right past Dad and began rooting

around and knocking over garbage pails. I watched him from the window. I guess he wanted bacon as much as we did.

"They told us afterward that when there's been a heavy snowfall, all the animals come around when they smell food, and that the bears are most indifferent to people. Sometimes they take food out of the camps. They seem to me pretty big for pets."

CHAPTER XVIII

A FAREWELL GIFT FROM CHINA

SO while Mary and her father were skiing or sliding under the shadows of El Capitan, the mighty guardian of the gates to the Yosemite paradise, Mr. and Mrs. Norton, Dave, Trix, and I started for the Tournament of Roses in Pasadena. Beautiful Pasadena! It might be called spotless town. Bushes were pruned, lawns were cut, and the palms in the street gave the city an appearance as of a huge formal garden, made by some Aladdin overnight. There were flowers everywhere—roses, of course. Pink and white and crimson and yellow, they seemed to be growing on the streets, in the windows, in the gardens, over the house, a veritable fairyland.

There were other flowers, too, the deep purple of the violets blending with the softer colors. The air was full of the softest fragrance as if one stood under a lilac bush in full bloom. There was a great procession of carriages and autos and floats, all decorated with garlands of flowers, as in the East we would decorate with bunting and flags.

We sat in the Nortons' auto and watched the floats passing, great barges of symbolic figures, or full of charming fairylike creatures, embedded in flowers.

"This simply can't be the first of January," I

GREAT BARGES OF SYMBOLIC FIGURES
(Photo from Star News Company, Pasadena)

"THIS SIMPLY CAN'T BE THE FIRST OF JANUARY"

said. "I won't believe that flowers can grow like this, even in California."

"But, Mother, I saw fields and fields of them from the aëroplane, just like colored squares in a checkerboard," Dave answered.

"Oh, yes, I have seen them, too, from the auto, but I can't believe it all the same."

"Just as I can't believe that I really went up in the machine," murmured Dave.

The different schools and city organizations represented, hotels and newspapers—all vied with each other in friendly competition to see who could produce the most beautiful effect. There was a Dutch windmill of flowers, drawn by three perfect horses; there was an Indian scene; there was a flower-formed Viking ship with a jolly crew of schoolgirls; and a gaily decorated auto belonging to one of the colleges carried a huge football of flowers. Horses, too, were not lacking, and Dave called my attention to their long flowing tails.

"It is so much prettier," he said, "than the horrid short tails we'd be likely to see in an eastern parade, unless they were cavalry horses."

The animals also were garlanded with flowers, and Trix was delighted with a fine fat pony which looked like an animated flower garden.

One float representing East and West, and containing a delightfully flowery snow man with a pipe in his mouth, caused Trixy to cry out "That's just like the man we made last winter," much to the pleasure of the other bystanders.

After the procession there were games; a chariot

race and a football game. Enormous crowds watched them, gathered from every quarter of the world, I think. I know there were Chinese and Italians and Spanish and Mexicans, and I heard an unmistakable voice from Maine observe, "Godfrey scissors, them hosses certainly can run." It was a joyous America that we were watching at play. It seemed like a foreign land more than our own beloved country.

Dave and his father and Mrs. Norton stayed to see the "East and West" football game which has grown to be one of the features of the Festival of Roses. Meanwhile, Mr. Norton took Trix and me for a little run in the car, out to the wonderful dam at the Devil's Gate, that great and beautiful feat of engineering which stores up the water for the city. Surely since the days of the Roman aqueducts nothing has been more graceful and impressive than this dam and the winding Colorado street bridge over the Arroyo Seco.

Mr. Norton's nephew and his wife came in for supper that night, and we told them of our many adventures and how we had finally given up the ring.

"By the way," I said, "isn't your cook here? He was the one who was to get the rings. I wonder if he ever did receive them."

"I imagine so," answered Mr. Norton. "He seems perfectly normal, so they have not hurt him any as yet."

"You'd better look out for squalls," Dave remarked. "I hope they are not in the house."

"Wu Fang always goes home to sleep. He probably keeps them there," replied Mr. Norton. "It is too bad that Mary had to lose her treasure."

"Wing Wang promised to give her something else in return," Dave observed. "I guess she'll get something."

"In the meantime I am very glad to have seen the last of the ring," I said. "And Wing Wang and El Lobo, I trust they will rest in peace and not come and haunt us. For we obeyed orders."

We sat through the evening planning for future meetings in the East. We were to leave Mills so soon that it seemed unlikely that we would meet again in the West. It was hard to think of leaving so many good friends.

We had to be up early in the morning to get our train for San Francisco. But early as we were, we found Wu Fang waiting for us. He had been a silent, efficient worker, so that I was surprised when he addressed me.

"Lil gal not come back here?"

"No, Wu Fang, she and the Doctor will join us in San Francisco."

"Lil box for her," he observed, and took from the inside of his waiter's white coat a tiny Chinese box of exquisite workmanship.

"Carry him safe?" he asked, evidently mistrusting my powers.

"I think I can, if nobody tries to rob me."

"Make lil gal safe everywhere," he said, and promptly went about his business of serving breakfast.

The box was not locked in any way, but I wrapped it carefully in paper and put it in my handbag with my purse.

"I am sure to watch both now," I thought.

I did not tell Dave and Trix, for I knew they would give me no rest until I had opened the box and discovered its contents. My own curiosity was hard enough to restrain. I could not have stood theirs.

We bade friendly farewell to our good friends at the station. We certainly were sorry to part from them.

"Maybe you will come back in an aëroplane, Dave," Mrs. Norton said at the last, and then we got into the train that was to carry us back to Oakland.

It was a long day, and the little box fairly burned in my bag, as the saying is. I think I must have looked at it a hundred times to be sure that it was safe, and I was certainly glad when the train came to a final stop and the Doctor's tall figure was visible on the platform, with Mary beside him. It was dark and I was glad of the taxi that whirled us away to Mills and the pleasant house that seemed so much like home.

Mary was full of her adventures in the Yosemite —the glorious frozen waterfalls, the great drifts and caves of snow, the glaciers, the ice caves and El Capitan, rising sheer out of the valley. They had climbed and skiied and tobogganed and snowshoed, and they were tired and sunburned from exposure to the burning sun and the icy winds. Trix and Dave were sunburned from quite a different reason, and

told of the events in which they had taken part, the Rose festival, the aëroplane trip to the desert, the moving pictures. Between them there was not a chance for the Doctor and me to get in a word.

Finally, after supper, which was a wonderful feast that Maria had prepared, I declared, "If you children will keep still for one minute, I have something for Mary which may interest her."

Instantly there was a hush. Then I drew from my bag the little carved sandalwood box and handed it to Mary.

"Wu Fang sent it to the 'lil gal,' " I said. "It will always make her safe."

Mary opened it with fingers that fairly trembled with eagerness. Inside was something wrapped in the finest of rice papers. The strange perfume of the East seemed to come from it and breathed romance and danger.

Mary opened the paper—and, "Oh, Mother! Oh, Daddy!" she cried.

Inside was a single jewel, an opal, which appeared to throw out fire from its quaint silver setting.

"What is it! what is it?" exclaimed Trix.

"Isn't it pretty!" said Dave. "But I'd rather have the ring."

"That's one of the most beautiful stones I have ever seen," said the Doctor. "It isn't very large, but a perfect fire opal. It must be worth a lot of money. I wonder what royal treasury or temple loot it came from."

"Ought Mary to keep it?" was my question.

"I don't know to whom she could return it. But

I think it is too valuable for her to wear all the time. It must be put away for safe-keeping and made into a pendant or a ring when she is older."

"It would be terrible to lose it," said Mary. "I never saw anything so beautiful. May I show it to Winifred?"

"To-morrow, but not to-night. Well, Wing Wang kept his word. He had that in his favor. Somehow, I have a sort of uncanny feeling that his will still exists and that he will watch over the stone."

"Don't be so spooky, Dad," answered Mary. "I surely am glad we came to California. This opal is worth all the rings in creation. Now I am ready to start for home."

"But it is hard to say good-by to all our good friends," I said.

"We can only hope to lure them to the East some time."

"Can't we take Maria and the bonies?" asked Trix.

"I am sure I wish we could," I answered. "But I'm afraid she would be hard to move, and the 'bonies' belong to the house."

"We have had a great time," said the Doctor. "I wonder if the opal will lead us a dance like the ring? I don't believe it. I think hereafter we can enjoy a peaceful existence."

"That would be so stupid," answered Mary.